DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 481 700 CS 512 513

AUTHOR Tarver, Sara G., Ed.
TITLE Direct Instruction News: Effective School Practices, 2003.
INSTITUTION Association for Direct Instruction, Eugene, OR.
ISSN ISSN-1068-7379
PUB DATE 2003-00-00
NOTE 78p.; Published semi-annually. Some articles are copyrighted from other sources and are not available from ERIC. For Volume 2 (2002 issues), see CS 512 512.
AVAILABLE FROM Association for Direct Instruction, P.O. Box 10252, Eugene, OR 97440 (annual subscription rate, $25). Tel: 800-995-2464 (Toll Free); Web site: http://www.adihome.org.
PUB TYPE Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Reports - Research (143)
JOURNAL CIT Direct Instruction News; v3 n1-2 Spr-Fall 2003
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Case Studies; *Classroom Techniques; *Educational Practices; Educational Research; Elementary Secondary Education; *Instructional Effectiveness; *Reading Instruction; *Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS *Direct Instruction; Engelmann (Siegfried)

ABSTRACT

The mission of the Association for Direct Instruction is to promote the improvement of effective educational methods. This journal, "Direct Instruction News," is their publication. The Spring 2003 (Volume 3, Number 1) contains the following articles: "Implementing DI Successfully" (Sara G. Tarver); "Textbooks: What?" (Bob Dixon); "Introduction to Implementation Companies"; "Seeing Is Believing versus Believing Is Seeing: The Fundamental Problem in Education" (Martin A. Kozloff); "Top Ten Teaching Errors" (Don Crawford); "Successfully Decoding Unknown Words: What's the Teacher's Role?" (Don Crawford); "Amanda's Story" (Linda Carnine); and "Review of the 'Reading Mastery Training Series'" (Kathleen M. Waldron-Soler and Angela Przychodzin-Havis). The Fall 2003 (Volume 3, Number 2) issue contains these articles: "Formula for Success: A No-Excuses-for-Failure Attitude, Competent Curriculum Development, and Technical Proficiency" (Sara G. Tarver); "2003 Excellence in Education Awards" (Amy Griffin); "How to Achieve Excellence?" (Richard Russell); "An Administrator Who Really Is an Instructional Leader" (Curtis D. Jasper); "City Springs Sets the Standard...Again" (Kurt Engelmann); "Technical Proficiency, Direct Instruction, and Educational Excellence" (Martin A. Kozloff); "What to Do When Students in 'Reading Mastery III' Have Comprehension Problems" (Don Crawford); "Response to 'Time' Magazine's Report on Dyslexia" (Zig Engelmann); "Emos Thuogths on Dydlexai" (Bob Dixon); "The Failures of a Teacher Education Program: A Need for Change" (Tina Errthum); and "Mastery--Why and How" (Dale Feik). (NKA)

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# Direct Instruction News: Effective School Practices, 2003.

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Direct Instruction news
ADI Effective School Practices

SARA G. TARVER, Editor, University of Wisconsin, Madison

# *Implementing DI Successfully*

In this issue of *DI News*, we recognize individuals and groups of individuals who have contributed to successful implementations of DI in significant ways. First and foremost, we recognize the contributions of Zig Engelmann. As all of us old-timers know, Direct Instruction was born of his creativity, analytical genius, and devotion to children's learning. The kind of intelligence, integrity, and fortitude that Zig has displayed across the years is rare in the field of education. As senior author of more than 100 instructional programs, his productivity is unparalleled. Without those instructional programs, there would be no Direct Instruction as we know it today. Although Zig has received a number of awards in the past, his work has not yet received the recognition that it deserves from the mainstream of education. The fact that he was the 2002 recipient of the Council of Scientific Society Presidents' prestigious Award for Achievement in Education Research is indicative of growing awareness and appreciation of his work (see announcement in this issue). Congratulations, Zig!

With increased emphasis on accountability has come increased demand for instruction that works. With increased demand for instruction that works has come increased demand for Direct Instruction. To meet the need for more Direct Instruction implementations across the country, experts have formed companies that provide comprehensive professional development and consultation. Four companies that are recognized by ADI are described in this issue. Each of them has played critical roles in successful implementations. What these companies are accomplishing is critical to the continued growth of Direct Instruction. To the many dedicated individuals in these companies, we say "Congratulations, and best wishes for continued success!"

We know that intensive teacher training in specific teaching techniques having to do with classroom organization and teacher presentation of lessons is essential to successful DI implementations. A series of videotapes that can be used to communicate the techniques used in the beginning level of *Reading Mastery* is reviewed in this issue. When I used these videotapes in my methods classes last semester, I found them to be a great help in teaching undergraduates about signaling, pacing, correcting, etc. The five expert teachers who serve as models on those tapes do an outstanding job. Congratulations to those teachers! Thanks to Palfreman Film Group for producing the tapes, Juniata Foundation for funding, and SRA for distributing the tapes. And thanks to Kathleen Waldron-Soler and Angela Przychodzin-Havis for reviewing the tapes for *DI News*.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of teachers who want to use DI programs find themselves in the unfortunate position where neither professional consultation nor training materials (such as training videotapes) are available to them. Fortunately, the teaching manuals that accompany published DI programs contain a wealth of information that the new teacher can study to get started. Beyond this, however, there is much to be learned. Knowledge of the kinds of errors that many teachers make as they are getting started can serve to prevent many of those errors. In this issue, Don Crawford describes succinctly the 10 most frequently occurring teaching errors that he has observed in his teacher training experiences. Moreover, he also shows how

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*The DI News* is published semiannually by the Association for Direct Instruction. The mission of the Association for Direct Instruction, as stated in the by-laws, is to promote the improvement of effective educational methods.

The Association for Direct Instruction was incorporated in 1981 in the state of Oregon for educational purposes. ADI is a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code and is a publicly supported organization as defined in Sections 170(b)(1)(A)(ii) and 509(a)(1). Donations are tax-deductible.

A copy or summary of the current financial statement, or annual report, and registration filed by ADI may be obtained by contacting: ADI, P.O. BOX 10252, Eugene, OR 97440 (541-485-1293). ADI is registered with the state of Oregon, Department of Justice, #79-16751. Copyright © 2003 Association for Direct Instruction.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES: $25 U. S.; $30 (U. S. currency) Canada; $40 Europe; $60 airmail to Europe.

(ISSN 1540-0026).

Managing Editor: Amy Griffin

Publisher: The Association for Direct Instruction

http://www.adihome.org

Layout and Design: Beneda Design, Eugene, OR

# *Contribute to DI News:*

*DI News* provides practitioners, ADI members, the DI community, and those new to DI, with stories of successful implementations of DI, reports of ADI awards, tips regarding the effective delivery of DI, articles focused on particular types of instruction, reprints of articles on timely topics, and position papers that address current issues. *The News*' focus is to provide newsworthy events that help us reach the goals of teaching children more effectively and efficiently and communicating that a powerful technology for teaching exists but is not being utilized in most American schools. Readers are invited to contribute personal accounts of success as well as relevant topics deemed useful to the DI community. General areas of submission follow:

**From the field:** Submit letters describing your thrills and frustrations, problems and successes, and so on. A number of experts are available who may be able to offer helpful solutions and recommendations to persons seeking advice.

**News:** Report news of interest to ADI's members.

**Success stories:** Send your stories about successful instruction. These can be short, anecdotal pieces.

**Perspectives:** Submit critiques and perspective essays about a theme of current interest, such as: school restructuring, the ungraded classroom, cooperative learning, site-based management, learning styles, heterogeneous grouping, Regular Ed Initiative and the law, and so on.

**Book notes:** Review a book of interest to members.

**New products:** Descriptions of new products that are available are welcome. Send the description with a sample of the product or a research report validating its effectiveness. Space will be given only to products that have been field-tested and empirically validated.

**Tips for teachers:** Practical, short products that a teacher can copy and use immediately. This might be advice for solving a specific but pervasive problem, a data-keeping form, a single format that would successfully teach something meaningful and impress teachers with the effectiveness and cleverness of Direct Instruction.

**Submission Format:** Send an electronic copy with a hard copy of the manuscript. Indicate the name of the word-processing program you use. Save drawings and figures in separate files. Include an address and email address for each author.

**Illustrations and Figures:** Please send drawings or figures in a camera-ready form, even though you may also include them in electronic form.

Completed manuscripts should be sent to:

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Acknowledgement of receipt of the manuscript will be sent by email. Articles are initially screened by the editors for placement in the correct ADI publication. If appropriate, the article will be sent out for review by peers in the field. These reviewers may recommend acceptance as is, revision without further review, revision with a subsequent review, or rejection. The author is usually notified about the status of the article within a 6- to 8-week period. If the article is published, the author will receive five complimentary copies of the issue in which his or her article appears.

*DI Successes...*
*continued from page 1*

the errors are intertwined, such that one error results in another error, and so on. Careful study of this short article is recommended for all inexperienced (as well as experienced) DI teachers. In another article in this issue, Don helps us to understand the role that the teacher plays in teaching students to decode unknown words and, in the process, he debunks the faulty teaching practices of whole language and/or its descendant called "balanced reading instruction." Thanks, Don, for sharing these insights that can be so helpful to the many teachers who have to "go it alone" in their struggles to become successful implementers of DI.

Too few principals take an active leadership role in implementing DI and disseminating results that show success. Karen Sullards is an exception. As Principal of Scott Elementary in Pulaski County in Little Rock, Arkansas, she proudly submitted glowing test results after only 1 year of a DI implementation. Those results are included in this issue. We hope that other principals will follow Karen's lead and let us know of their successes.

Some of the most successful DI implementers are parents of children who have the most difficulty learning—children with disabilities of one kind or another. The story of Amanda and her mother, Marsha, is a particularly inspiring story of what their psychiatrist called a "miracle" (in this issue, submitted by Linda Carnine). Such stories of miracles with individual children are as important as stories of great success in schoolwide implementations, for they demonstrate that even the most difficult-to-teach children can learn to read at or above grade level if provided Direct Instruction by someone who is committed to learning to use Direct Instruction properly. They also show that our schools' expectations for such children usually have been much too low. Amanda and Marsha are representative of many who have had similar experiences. Also printed in this issue is a letter from the grandmother of a student in Pearl, Mississippi, whose ability to read has transformed with the use of Direct Instruction. We recognize and congratulate all and encourage all to share their stories with the readers of *DI News*.

And thank goodness for Bob Dixon's ability to communicate educational absurdities through entertaining and illuminating satire. In this issue he describes his thoughts about the noninstruction in his daughter's math textbook (as well as other textbooks). Thanks, Bob, for providing us with an occasion to chuckle at the sad state of many of today's textbooks.

I'm happy to announce that Martin Kozloff, a long time advocate of DI, has agreed to contribute a column to each issue of *DI News*. Martin is one of the few individuals I know who knows the tiniest details of DI practices and also understands the "big picture" having to do with politics and educational wars. In this issue, Martin shares his musings about skirmishes, battles, and wars. If you'd like to respond to Martin's column or any other article in this issue, please pen a letter to the editor and send to ADI.

BOB DIXON

# Textbooks: What?

Every so often, I sit back and look at a textbook, and wonder, has someone gone completely nuts? If that's the case, then it's an epidemic. Textbooks look back at me and scream, "I think you're an idiot!" They say that to me, to the teachers who use them—anyone who looks at them.

I'm not exaggerating. My daughter's sixth-grade math book has a word problem involving Mt. Everest. Right above the problem is a *picture* of Mt. Everest. Someone associated with the publisher had to first find the picture, then submit the paperwork to get permission to use the picture, and then make sure the picture got credited properly and legally in the textbook. All this is *a lot* of trouble, given especially that the mother companies of most textbook publishers have very deep pockets. A little mistake on the credits could cost a genuine fortune.

What, exactly, is the contribution of the picture of Mt. Everest to the textbook? Well, it helps add more pages, which in turn helps create the illusion that the book has value (because it has volume). It adds to the cost of the book. It creates a nice little break between problem 23 and problem 24.

I can't even begin to imagine the instructional value of that picture in that book. It contributes nothing to teaching math. I don't believe kids even look at it, and if they do, they're just being distracted from the tasks at hand.

Speaking of "contributes nothing to math," my daughter's math text has some good examples of taking political correctness to its furthest extremes. It sticks in cultural passages and pictures here and there, with no attempt whatsoever to connect the passages with math. One passage, for example, is about Bessie Smith. There isn't the slightest doubt (in my view) that Bessie Smith's contribution to music in the twentieth century was extraordinary, and not limited solely to blues. I'd absolutely put her at the top of my list when it comes to music history, music appreciation, and musicology in general.

I suppose the passage is in a *math* book because Bessie was an African American. I have a suggestion for the publisher: if its editors are *sincerely* interested in doing something positive for any group of children, including especially low socioeconomic children of any description—publish a textbook that teaches kids how to do math. Start there, then add frills, as you deem necessary, to market the thing.

This same textbook—when it comes to math—does something that convinces me that the editors aren't really that concerned about the well-being of kids. In any set of practice problems—any set at all—the last few problems in the set require kids *to do math that the book hasn't taught them how to do*! This "feature" of the text must be one put in consciously (to use the term "consciously" loosely). I suppose the rationale is based on complete ignorance of the concepts of generalization and transference: kids can, through magic, generalize outside of the range of a generalization they have been taught.

And speaking of asking kids to do something they haven't been taught, "critical thinking" problems are a regular part of the text. Those problems are much like the ones we'd see in a book of brainteasers. Here's one: "Work with a partner. [Good idea, especially if your partner is an adult who knows how to do problems like this.] Arrange the digits 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 into two decimals so that their sum is as close to 1 as possible. Use each digit only once. The sum cannot be equal to or greater than 1."

This is the same book that tries very hard to make math "authentic." And interdisciplinary. "Maureen has a leaf collection. She has 15 willow leaves, 10 oak, 7 maple, 11 dogwoods, and 17 miscellaneous leaves. Make a bar graph showing this data." This problem is clearly labeled as "science." Is this authentic, because a kid has a leaf collection, just like my daughter and all the other kids in the class, or is it showing the relationship between science and math? None of the above.

*Do the authors or editors of this textbook want to do something to really improve the future prospects and choices for Hispanic kids? First, teach them to do math.*

If they took the "science" label off of the problem, I'd say it was as good as anything for practicing bar graphs. Doesn't seem very authentic to me, though: wouldn't a really good leaf collection have *one* really good example of many varieties of leaves, including especially rare ones? That's what I would recommend, with the leaves arranged in some way that highlights various classes of leaves. Maybe the best thing about such a collection is that it would be really easy to show it on a bar graph.

They have these "critical thinking" problems along the lines: "Jane is 7 years older than her brother, and the sum of their ages, plus 5, multiplied by 4, is the age of their house. How old is everyone and everything?" The people who author these books are the same ones who look back derisively at my mathematics education because we had to figure out when a couple of trains, leaving opposite coasts and going different speeds, would meet up. The problem wasn't all that authentic, but I think the algebra for solving it was. I have nothing against the "Jane is 7 years..." problem *per se*. If you've taught the algebra for solving...just about anything...then no problem. But in my daughter's text, "critical thinking" means "something relatively difficult to do that we haven't taught anyone how to do, mostly because we don't know how to do that."

Ah ha! Here's one of those cultural passages that relates to mathematics. It's about the former Treasurer of the United States, Katherine Davalos Ortega. She supervised over 5,000 employees. Five thousand: that's math, right? Do the authors or editors of this textbook want to do something to really improve the future prospects and choices for Hispanic kids? First, teach them to do math.

It's very difficult to open this book at random and not find something ridiculous. Just about every assignment has a portfolio...something or other. I don't know what to call these things. They're numbered, like 1 through 25 are problems adding fractions with unlike denominators, and number 28 is "Portfolio: Identify a problem from this chapter that you found particularly challenging, and put it in your portfolio." WHAT!?!?!? (Honestly, I'm not making any of this up.) For starters, nearly all the problems in the chapter are challenging because the book doesn't give teachers anything to help teach the math. I'd put the whole book in my portfolio, and then I'd find a special place for the whole portfolio: an inflammable place.

Are these types of problems limited to math textbooks? Not hardly. (I suppose, technically, that "not hardly" is a double negative, so...) Hardly. One of my "favorite" examples—meaning a very painful one—was in a science text. It was in a chapter on convection, a very good concept to teach in a science text. The particular part I was looking at dealt with convection on volcanoes. There was, on one of those pages, a small box with a suggestion for an activity for special education students: have them make a volcano out of paper maché. Convection is a critical concept in several branches of science, and it can be difficult for the average student. I don't quite see how *removing special education kids from instruction* can really help them learn and master this critical concept.

Here's a couple of interesting examples of noninstruction from a language arts program, sixth-grade level. The title of the program is, "If it's on Your Adoption List, We Teach it." Well, there is little doubt in my mind that if something in language arts is on your adoption list, this program "covers" it or "touches on" it or something like that. Teaches it?

There is a chapter in the book on pronouns. That itself is interesting at sixth grade: most native speakers of English use all the English pronouns by the time they hit kindergarten, or earlier. For non-native speakers, this chapter isn't going to cut it. With respect to most students in most schools, the most interesting instructional challenge is teaching kids to use pronouns *correctly* that they are likely to use *incorrectly*. Native speakers don't agonize over "I" versus "me" in sentences such as: ___ like candy. On the other hand, sixth-grade native speakers and many adult native speakers might get confused with: If you give the package to Jake and ____, we'll deliver it for you.

If we're going to teach that, then… we'd have to teach it, as in providing some instruction such that students learn when to use I and me and we and us and she and her and that sort of thing. Back to "Something for Everyone," there is one lesson on "Personal Pronouns—Objective Case." Exercise 1 of that lesson has students choose between nominative and objective pronouns: 15 sentences. In most of the 15 sentences, the pronouns are in compounds, which is good, considering that's the only time they're a problem for anyone. That's the up side. It is also true that the answer to every exercise is the objective form of personal pronouns, which are conveniently listed on the page. In short, students can do this exercise without a clue about nominative and objective case of pronouns. (I'm not talking about the grammatical terminology. I'm just talking about learning which form of a pair of pronouns to use.)

*Publishers spend huge amounts of money developing this stuff, where instruction is the least of their concerns, if a concern at all.*

The book offers teachers a suggestion for this Exercise 1. It's in a little section of its own, in the margin of the teacher's edition. Among other things, it says: Remind students that nominative case pronouns are used as subjects and subject complements, whereas objective case pronouns are used as objects. First, I don't think reminding the students of this is necessary, given that certainly not one got it the first time it was mentioned. Second, as I said above, students can ignore that stuff and just select the pronouns that are listed on the same page as the exercise. And personally, I'm not entirely sure I'd choose "subject complements" as one of my highest priority language arts content items. Let's just say they succeeded in teaching kids to say, for example, "This is she" when someone calls, asking for Judy. It's just my guess that Judy might get beat up the next day at school. I wouldn't want to be party to that.

People who think of DI in terms of scripts are welcome to go ahead and turn this thing into DI. The introduction might look a little like this:

1. THE NOMINATIVE CASE PRONOUNS ARE USED AS SUBJECTS AND SUBJECT COMPLEMENTS.
2. EVERYBODY, TELL ME WHAT THE NOMINATIVE PRONOUNS ARE USED FOR. (Pause, possibly for a very long time.) GET READY. (Signal) "Subjects and subject complements."

Doesn't really help much, does it? Garbage in, garbage out. Scripting wouldn't save this book, by a long shot. Well, it could help *a little*. One instruction in the book says, "Invite volunteers to write their four questions on the board." An advantage of a DI-type script, if we're consistent with all DI programs, is that *no one gets any invitations*. The book doesn't say anywhere what to do if students happen to respectfully decline the invitations.

So what's my point? That textbooks aren't very good? You already know that, I'm sure. Concrete examples just make the idea more humorous—and more depressing. Publishers spend huge amounts of money developing this stuff, where instruction is the least of their concerns, if a concern at all. At the very tippy top of their list is political correctness. Words like fat and man and cat seem like pretty good beginning reading examples to me, but they are all potentially problematic, in terms of political correctness, or more precisely, in terms of political correctness gone berserk. "Fat" might offend someone overweight (like me). "Cat" might offend dog lovers, or, possibly, beatniks. "Man" is inherently sexist, although it seems we can get around that last one if we (a) have 49% of the characters in a book be male and

51% be female, and (b) always show the men putting flowers in a vase or cooking or having a baby.

Don't send notes about this (to me), please. I'm well aware that not that long ago, we had instructionally worthless textbooks with illustrations of white people only, such as Dick and Jane, and even mostly white dogs (Spot). Even the white people weren't representative of *all* white people. In reality, I don't object at all to political correctness, especially when it hasn't gone berserk. It's an easy thing to accommodate. It doesn't require a mind like Zig Engelmann's. Basically, all it requires is the ability to count.

Actually, it might be more challenging than that. It isn't easy to both at the same time (a) make the textbooks *authentic*, and to (b) create an idealized vision of society that doesn't exist now and probably won't ever. I don't know how to do that, myself.

All I'm really interested in here is the priorities that govern the content of textbooks. If a textbook is, first and foremost, instructionally sound, and effective, and efficient, and otherwise is a highly sophisticated tool for teachers to use, then what the heck: buy rights to some nice photographs. But no number or quality of photographs or essays or pictures of minorities (racial or otherwise) or invitations or cooperative learning suggestions or anything like any of these things is going to make a textbook instructionally more sound. No number or quality of noninstructional priorities—even very important ones—adds up to good instruction. Even scripts and choral responding are pretty stupid if the instruction underlying this isn't pretty good.

The most practical application of any of this is in reference to textbook adoption. I'm a bit cynical, however, when it comes to adoptions. I've seen many sets of adoption criteria in which the notion of children learning was not a part. I've seen cases where "having blending" scores the same number of adoption points as "having high quality photographs." And then there is the idea of a "current copyright." That's some stupid requirement that schools voluntarily impose upon themselves, thereby ensuring that schools will always have to spend substantially more on textbooks than necessary.

Among the many recommendations of the whole language guru's at one point was that of dispensing with textbooks altogether. That might have been as close as they ever got to giving good advice. ADI

# *Siegfried Engelmann Receives Award for Achievement in Education Research*

The Council of Scientific Society Presidents (CSSP), the country's leading science leadership development institute and advocate of policy on science, has named University of Oregon Professor of Education Siegfried (Zig) Engelmann the 2002 recipient of the CSSP Award for Achievement in Education Research. Engelmann, creator of Direct Instruction and founder and Director of the National Institute for Direct Instruction (NIFDI), is the fifth person to receive the award since its inception in 1998. The award is given annually for education research that has been shown to improve children's learning and understanding measurably. Engelmann received the award at the national meeting of the CSSP in Washington, DC in December, 2002.

In notifying Engelmann of the award, CSSP's President, Dr. Martin Apple, wrote that Engelmann was selected "because of the high quality of…research designs, high quality of research execution, innovative discoveries, and measurable impact on the learning of students."

Engelmann is the senior author of more than 100 instructional programs. He is the author or co-author of more than 100 articles and chapters of professional books, and more than a dozen professional books and monographs. He served as the co-director of the University of Oregon's Direct Instruction Follow Through model, which outperformed all other comparison models in accelerating the performance of at-risk children in Grades K–3. In 1997 he founded NIFDI, a not-for-profit corporation that assists schools implementing Direct Instruction schoolwide. In a study of 24 instructional approaches published by the Educational Research Service in 1999, the comprehensive model of Direct Instruction was found to be only one of two comprehensive reform models with a strong record of improving the performance of students at the elementary level. The National Institute for Direct Instruction has been endorsed by New American Schools as one of the country's top providers of comprehensive school improvement designs. NIFDI joined the New American Schools collective of affiliated organizations in October 2002.

CSSP was founded in 1973 to provide a forum for communication and joint action by the country's leading scientists. CSSP is composed of the presidents, presidents-elect and immediate past presidents of nearly 70 scientific societies and scientific federations, whose combined membership numbers exceed one million. CSSP's interest in the quality of public education has grown in recent years. In his message to U.S. President George Bush in November 2000, CSSP President Dr. Apple identified education reform as one of the country's top policy issues affecting science.

For more information on CSSP, visit its web site at www.mdsg.umces.edu/CSSP/home.html. For more information on the National Institute for Direct Instruction (NIFDI), visit its web site at www.nifdi.org or call 1-877-485-1973. ADI

# An Introduction to Implementation Companies

Professional development companies provide experience and expertise in implementing effective, research-based strategies for improving school performance. The following information is an introduction to four of these companies and their characteristics.

## The Center for Applied Research in Education (C.A.R.E.)

Founded by Bonnie Grossen of the University of Oregon, the focus of C.A.R.E. is to provide initial training, in-class coaching, support, and consultation that will give educators the knowledge and assistance necessary for them to implement DI programs and research with integrity in upper elementary, middle school, and remedial high school. The instructional programs utilized by C.A.R.E have 30 years of experimental comparison research supporting the remedial components and 20 years supporting the standards-based programs. C.A.R.E. is listed as an implementer approved on the national Good Schools list of the Northwest Regional Laboratory. In addition to instructional programs, schoolwide systems for managing the discipline and behavior of the school (the Positive Behavior Support Model) is generally a component of a C.A.R.E. implementation. C.A.R.E. has been in operation for 3 years, has the capacity to work with 20 school districts, utilizes the services of 30 consultants, and currently works with schools and districts located in Florida, California, Hawaii, Kansas, and Oregon.

By guiding the school in establishing and coordinating a progress-monitoring system for setting goals and problem solving to remove obstacles on a continuous basis, C.A.R.E. will help a school, or a district, achieve their goals. The C.A.R.E. professional development model utilizes side-by-side coaching with teachers from initial curriculum training to follow-up with teachers in the classroom to improve the technical delivery strategies. This results in a very efficient training model and immediately "makes it relevant" for the participants. The involvement of actual students, completing the lesson they were on that day, sets the C.A.R.E. training model apart from the rest. C.A.R.E. offers a comprehensive progress-monitoring piece that accompanies each of the following DI curricula: *Corrective Reading, Expressive Writing, Reasoning and Writing, Spelling Through Morphographs, and Connecting Math Concepts.*

C.A.R.E. lists the following advantages for working with their network to implement DI in the middle grades:

1. Sustained academic growth.
2. Sustained professional growth for teachers. Teachers have opportunities to become host coaches, workshop presenters, site coordinators, and leaders in the state and the nation.
3. Progress monitoring process for sustaining the quality of the implementation, troubleshooting, and solving problems formatively.
4. Group-administered placement test for resource-efficient placement of students into groups (requires one class period and electronic scoring).
5. Access to knowledge gained from experience and data gathered in large-scale implementations.
6. Culture of data-based decision-making at the classroom level, school level, and national level.
7. Shared expertise of a highly experienced team of teachers, trainers, researchers, and leaders.

When selecting an implementation company, C.A.R.E. suggests that a school/district should consider how well the company works with the individual schedules, academic needs, and concerns pertaining to each school and its staff.

An additional component of the C.A.R.E. approach is the "Beacon School" Professional Development Model. A "Beacon School" is an implementation with a system for replicating itself. One or more schools (intermediate and/or high school level) are selected to work with C.A.R.E to implement the evidence-based programs with the Beacon system of training. These selected schools will receive a greater share of the resources available for such an implementation. In return for receiving a greater share of the resources, the Beacon school staff will agree to "pay forward" the benefits of these resources by sharing what they learn through the Beacon school training model. For example, teachers in the Beacon school will allow teachers who are just learning the model to come into their classrooms to work with them and their students as the teacher trainees learn how to respond to the specific needs of students and follow the specific procedures prescribed by the model.

### Advantages of the "Beacon School" training model

1. Initial training emphasizes practice with students in the classroom.
2. Intensive in-class coaching with initial training brings greater competence.
3. A focus on student performance in follow-up coaching brings higher achievement.
4. Initial wave of teachers trained become the host coaches and trainers for subsequent waves.
5. A districtwide and statewide implementation can proceed with growing internal support in a very cost-effective manner.
6. Teachers receive opportunities for on-going professional growth and leadership within the district.

Several schools that have worked with C.A.R.E. have received recognition for their improved performance. The following schools in California had teachers who received cash awards for doubling their target gain scores: Raymond Cree Middle School, Palm Springs; Apple Valley Middle School, Apple Valley; Starr King Middle School and Natomas High School, Sacramento. In Florida, teachers from Lincoln Middle School in Gainesville received $1000 cash for student performance.

For additional information about C.A.R.E. including articles related to implementation at the middle and high school level, contact information for model schools working with C.A.R.E., and establishing cost and initiating implementation, contact:

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### Educational Resources, Inc. (ERI)

ERI was incorporated in 1998 and will begin its sixth year in the fall of 2003. The founding partners are Paul McKinney, Molly Blakely, and Ed Schaefer, and the company maintains a cadre of 21 consultants. ERI is

**ERI Table 1**

*Tippens Elementary School*

GCRCT

(Scores include ALL students: Special Education, ESOL, etc.)

*4th Grade*

| % of Total Students | | Reading | | | Language Arts | | | Mathematics | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 |
| **Did Not Meet** | Tippens | **60** | **50** | **18** | **43** | **50** | **35** | **80** | **64** | **29** |
| | State | 35 | 26 | 20 | 29 | 26 | 23 | 38 | 38 | 34 |
| **Meets** | Tippens | **30** | **33** | **44** | **57** | **40** | **59** | **15** | **32** | **59** |
| | State | 37 | 42 | 41 | 55 | 58 | 62 | 51 | 51 | 53 |
| **Exceeds** | Tippens | **10** | **17** | **38** | **0** | **10** | **6** | **5** | **4** | **12** |
| | State | 28 | 32 | 38 | 16 | 16 | 15 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| **Meets + Exceeds** | Tippens | **40** | **50** | **82** | **57** | **50** | **65** | **20** | **36** | **71** |
| | State | 65 | 74 | 79 | 72 | 74 | 77 | 62 | 63 | 66 |

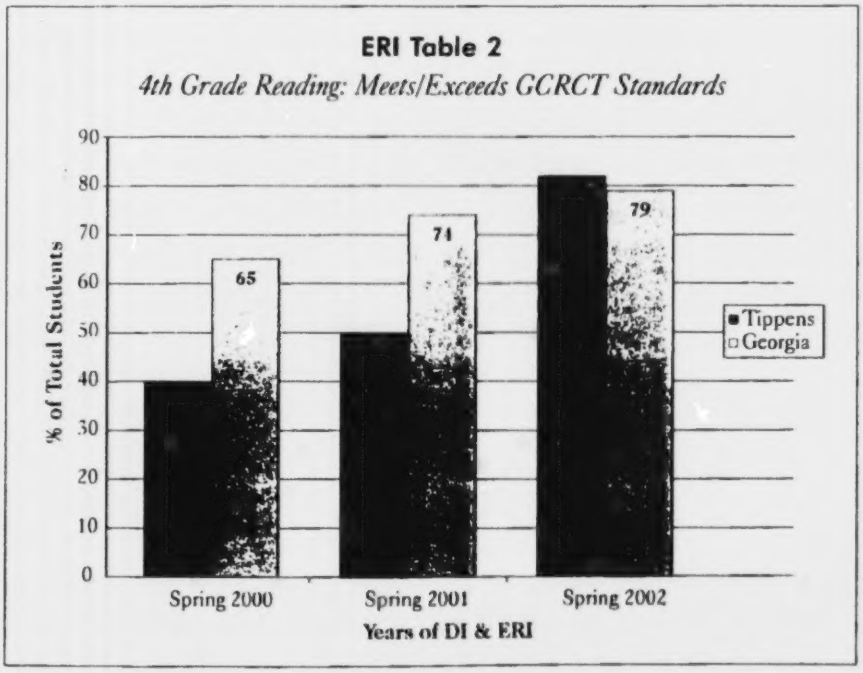
presently partnered with 60 schoolwide implementations in 22 states and Canada. The total population includes over 29,000 students in various large urban and small rural areas. The company maintains solid relationships with both public and charter school organizations. ERI has no set limitations on the type or locale of the schools with which they partner, and the schools they are currently working with represent the geographic range of the country.

ERI has a wide range of implementation types. The type of implementation is dependent on the experience the school brings to the project. Schools new to Direct Instruction are required to implement *Reading Mastery* beginning in kindergarten, *Corrective Reading* beginning in third grade along with *Reading Mastery*, and *Language for Learning* in Pre-K and kindergarten. The *Language* sequence expands each successive year and *Spelling Mastery* is suggested for the second year at all grade levels. It has been the experience of ERI that it is more effective when teachers develop sound instructional strategies over time with continued supportive supervision.

ERI provides ongoing supervisory training for site administrators and DI Coordinators. They host an ongoing Administrators Academy where site supervisors are updated on new programs and procedures relevant to their school project.

ERI maintains a product line tailored to fit the needs of any DI site. Materials include training video sets in *Reading Mastery* and *Reading Mastery Plus*, *Language for Learning*, *Corrective Reading Decoding* and *Comprehension;* Advanced Training and Supervision; and Sounds, Signals, Corrections, and Pronunciation for *Reading Mastery* and *Corrective Reading*. They also market DataMaster, a comprehensive data collection and reporting program; Report Writer, a computerized program for creating formal observation reports; Assessment Forms for teachers to compile concise, consistent assessment data on all students; and Writing Extension activities for *Corrective Reading Decoding A*, *B1*, and *B2*.

ERI assists schools with grant writing activities to ensure that all the necessary components of the grant application process are addressed with the most comprehensive information and data available.



**ERI Table 2**

*4th Grade Reading: Meets/Exceeds GCRCT Standards*

The conviction of ERI is that the research on staff development is clear: college coursework, inservice workshops, and after school meetings alone will have little impact on a schoolwide implementation. Effective continuous staff development must take place in classrooms with administrators, teachers, and students. This is the essence of "coaching" which constitutes an absolute requisite element of any successful school improvement effort. The USDOE recommends that schools secure "high-quality external support and assistance from comprehensive school reform entities with experience in schoolwide reform and improvement."

Recently, two schools working with ERI have been designated as Title I Schools of Excellence, and a third school was identified as a New Jersey Blue Ribbon School for Student Achievement.

The Assistant Superintendent of Pickens County School District in Jasper, Georgia, Dr. Kathryn Floyd, offers these comments about working with ERI.

"Personalized, site-tailored, context-sensitive, professional—all of these terms describe the quality of training and coaching provided to those who contract with Educational Resources, Inc.

"ERI ensures fidelity of implementation of Direct Instruction with positive outcomes in student performance and staff morale.

This team is stellar, absolutely stellar."

For information on working with ERI, visiting a model school, and costs associated with working with ERI, contact:

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Director of Operations
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Fulton, NY 13069
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E-mail: dismac@aol.com

## J/P Associates

J/P Associates has been serving schools since 1989, and the president, Janie Feinberg, has been instrumental in teaching, training, and implementing DI for over 30 years. Currently, J/P is working with over 100 schools in approximately 25 districts across the country. J/P is committed to helping all schools achieve success, regardless of location, type, or size. J/P employs 24 full time consultants.

The philosophy of J/P is that in order for a site to be truly successful they must eventually be able to function without the help of the implementation company. This means that every person involved must be able to competently execute the many details associated with a successful implementation. They have a systematic method for helping schools achieve independence and success, labeled the "Five Stages to Independence." Following is a summary of the stages.

Stage One: Modeling and Intensive Professional Development: all staff members receive intensive training in the DI programs and J/P consultants focus on developing a strong Instructional Leadership Team led by the Principal and DI Coordinator. In addition to instructional methodology, each J/P consultant is trained in classroom management and behavioral techniques.

Stage Two: Leading and Navigation: J/P consultants focus on getting representatives of all levels of school staff involved in the Instructional Leadership Team. The individuals chosen for the team will be trained to plot their school's success, and will lead the school to maintaining academic achievement once J/P has left.

Stage Three: Testing and Growing: J/P consultants test themselves and their sites to ensure that the consultants have successfully taught the Instructional Leadership Team how to administer placement tests, group, analyze pacing guides, back-test, and test for acceleration.

Stage Four: Approaching Independence: J/P tests the critical elements of the implementation. Principals are involved in monitoring and feedback, DI Coordinators and cadre are coaching and giving feedback to teachers, the Leadership Team has developed a common vision of instructional excellence, and has clearly defined roles for all staff members in achieving that goal.

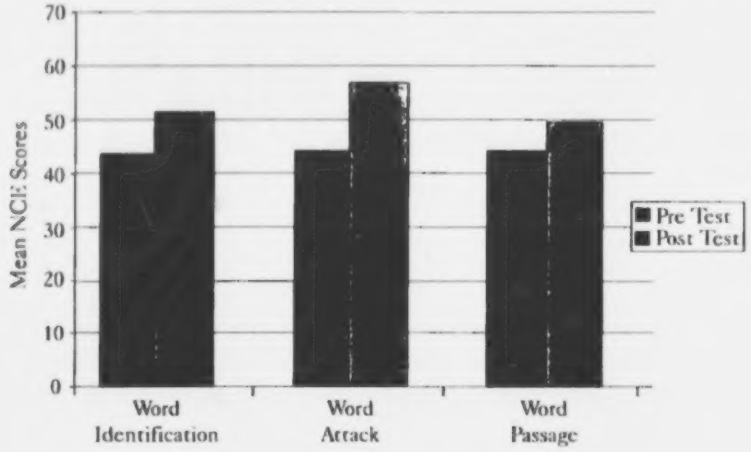
Stage Five: Independence: J/P tests all areas of implementation. Principals are consistently monitoring and giving feedback to staff, with the goal of being in DI classrooms 90 min per day. Cadre are coaching staff members on a regular basis and giving written feedback in terms of supportive supervision. DI Coordinators are firm in the role and monitor classrooms regularly.

After completing all five stages at mastery, J/P will provide the site with a Maintenance Contract. The goal is to enable a site to:

1. Have a clear academic focus and mission—all children can learn when teachers have the appropriate tools.
2. Have consistent and structured staff development relevant to the research-based program.
3. Have continuous supportive supervision to enable all teachers to be technically proficient and masters of instruction.

**J/P Table 1**

*Pre and Post NCE Data as Indicated for Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests for Jacksonville Sample for DI Schools (n=427)*



### Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests—Revised—Jacksonville DI Schools—A Sample Subtests Word Identification, Word Attack, and Passage Comprehension

Four hundred twenty-seven children in Jacksonville DI Schools were administered three subtests in reading from the test indicated in the title. In Word Identification the child is asked to give the correct pronunciation of various words in a list. The chart demonstrates the progress made by students in DI schools. The pretest was administered in August 1999 and the posttest in April 2000. Instruction covered 8 months. Students in DI schools made significant progress in only 8 months of instruction with J/P training and coaching.

4. Develop strong instructional leaders who focus on literacy, develop an efficient instructional leadership team, and ensure a safe and effective environment for all students.

The following components are included in J/P implementations at each stage in the plan for independence: effective research-based methods and strategies; comprehensive design for effective school functioning, from scheduling to management to training, so that all children will be academically successful; professional development, prior to the beginning of the school year and ongoing training throughout the implementation; benchmark standards and lesson pacing monitoring; staff support for implementation; comprehensive Parent Involvement program; supportive supervision with monthly coaching for all instructors and consistent feedback to the staff; and data analysis.

J/P also provides grant writing assistance to their sites. An experienced grant writer works with staff at the site to prepare grant applications for grants such as the CSRD and Reading First. They have assisted schools in securing thousands of dollars of grant money, translating into higher student achievement. J/P's experience with DI implementations has given them a perspective from which to assess common challenges DI schools face. As gaps in the instructional tools have emerged, J/P has filled those gaps through the development of new instructional tools and materials.

J/P schools have been recognized for their improvement. Portland Elementary in Hamburg, Arkansas has received national recognition as a Distinguished Title I School, A Heritage Foundation "No Excuses" school, and was highlighted in the February 2002 issue of *Reader's Digest*. Whitten Elementary in Lee County, Arkansas, was also recognized as a Distinguished Title I School, and in the 2001 Annual Report of the Baltimore City Public School System, George Kelson Elementary was recognized as one of six excellent schools.

For additional details about J/P's model, information about model schools and data, and assessing cost, contact:

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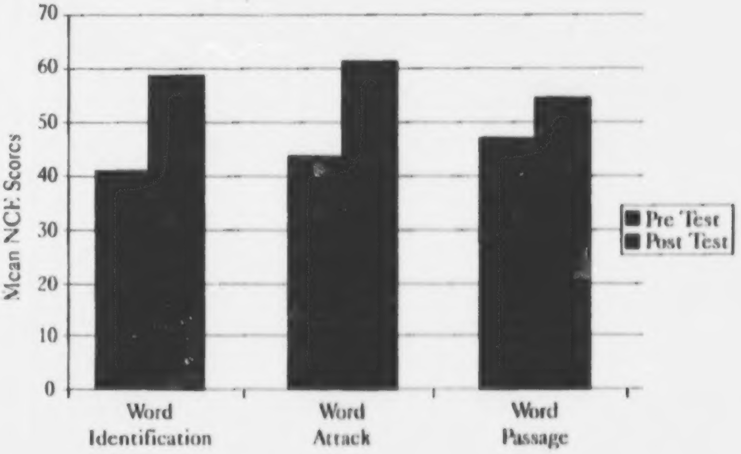
### The National Institute for Direct Instruction (NIFDI)

Founder, Zig Engelmann, started NIFDI in 1997. NIFDI typically works with 25 schools at one time, but has the capacity for much larger implementations. They work with urban and rural schools across the country. There are no limitations in terms of location or type of school as long as the school adheres to the NIFDI model and can support all aspects of the model. The organization prefers to work with clusters of schools rather than isolated schools as this decreases cost and logistics of training and implementation. NIFDI employs two project directors, nine implementation managers, and five coaches' trainers.

NIFDI is endorsed by New American Schools. In an analysis of NIFDI, it was stated that, "After undergoing a rigorous review, the National Institute for Direct Instruction was invited to join the New American Schools (NAS) collective of affiliated organizations dedicated to turning around low performing schools." The review ensures that the model is comprehensive and

**J/P Table 2**

*Pre and Post NCE Data as Indicated for Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests for Oceanway*



### Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests—Revised—Oceanway, Jacksonville, FL—Subtests Word Identification, Word Attack, and Passage Comprehension

One hundred forty-three children at Oceanway Elementary School were administered three subtests in reading as indicated in the title. The chart demonstrates the significant progress made by students at Oceanway in a period of 8 months of reading in Direct Instruction. All scores are expressed in NCE's. In summary, not only do students at Oceanway identify and attack words, but they also understand what they have read at a high level of proficiency.

that NIFDI has the capacity for implementing the model on a large scale. NIFDI is also listed as the DI Current Service Provider in the catalog of School Reform Models.

NIFDI's mission is twofold: (a) to help schools and districts make the systemic changes needed to achieve the highest student performance possible with DI schoolwide (or at least grade-by-grade, which could build into a schoolwide implementation), and (b) to help schools and districts build the capacity to sustain the implementation at a high level and/or expand the implementation of DI to other schools.

NIFDI implementations adhere to the *Developer's Guidelines*, a comprehensive set of implementation components authored by Zig Engelmann. The *Guidelines* cover all major factors that affect student performance at schools. NIFDI guarantees a successful transformation of lower performing schools to higher performing schools if the *Guidelines* are followed.

Low performing schools seeking to become high performing schools face a difficult challenge. They require extensive professional development, management support, capacity building, and other types of support in order to achieve and sustain a successful transformation. The *Guidelines* provide a more detailed account of the components that NIFDI provides as an integral approach to implementation. These components include:

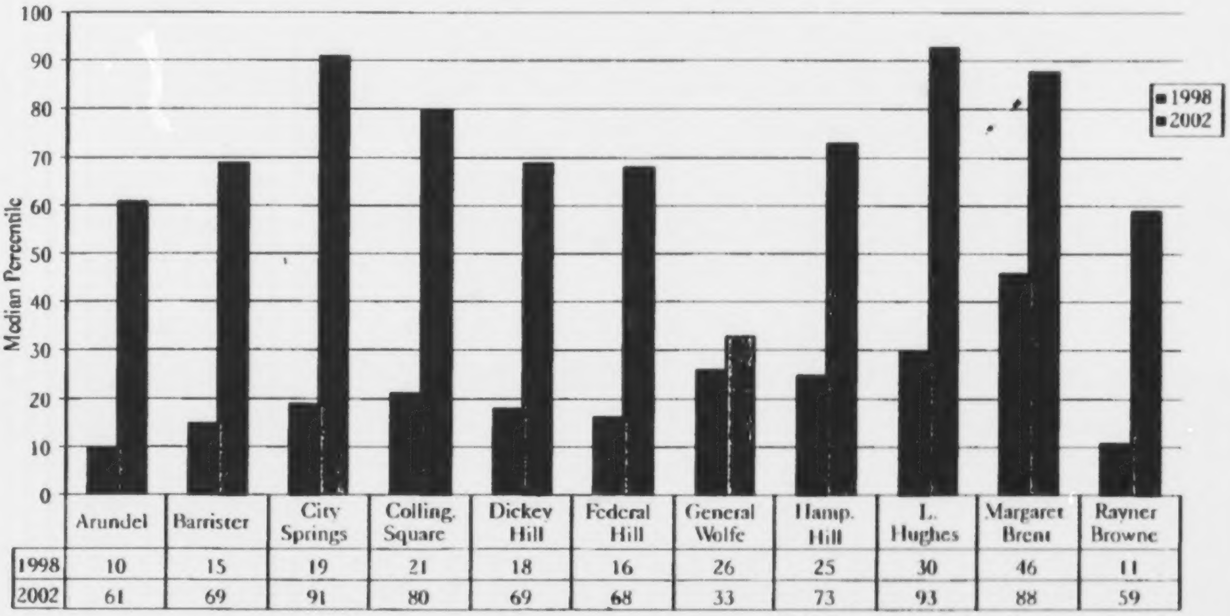
Full Participation: All staff and students of agreed-upon grades and the administration participate in a NIFDI implementation. On the staff side, this includes paraprofessionals and "specials" (e.g., physical education and music). On the student side, this includes all students. All students are incorporated into DI groups and the DI instructional sequence, including English Language Learners and the mildly mentally retarded. All staff and students must be included or student performance progress will be uneven, and some students will not learn the concepts and skills they will need in future years.

A Comprehensive Curricular Approach: For model schools, NIFDI implements DI in all major subject areas, including reading, language, spelling, mathematics, and cultural literacy. For schools seeking assistance in reading only, NIFDI implements DI reading and language programs together. The DI language track includes *Language for Learning, Language for Thinking,* and *Reasoning and Writing*. Without the full language track, student performance on reading comprehension will suffer, especially the performance of at-risk students.

Scheduling: NIFDI develops schedules that devote a near-optimal amount of time to DI, including a second reading period for all students below grade level.

**NIFDI Table 1**

*CTBS Reading Scores in NIFDI Baltimore Schools*
*1st Grade*



| | Arundel | Barrister | City Springs | Colling. Square | Dickey Hill | Federal Hill | General Wolfe | Hamp. Hill | L. Hughes | Margaret Brent | Rayner Browne |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1998 | 10 | 15 | 19 | 21 | 18 | 16 | 26 | 25 | 30 | 46 | 11 |
| 2002 | 61 | 69 | 91 | 80 | 69 | 68 | 33 | 73 | 93 | 88 | 59 |

The efficient use of time is critical for accelerating student performance.

Two Levels of Consultants: For every school, NIFDI provides an Implementation Manager, who is on site for an average of 24–32 days a year, and a Project Director, a senior consultant who oversees multiple implementations and is on site at least three times a year. The Implementation Manager and Project Director both participate in weekly conference calls.

Coaches' Training: Teachers are identified as peer coaches (usually one per grade level) and they go through a three-level training sequence in which they learn how to complete written records, analyze data, make observations, and identify and remediate problems of instruction and behavior.

Off-site Data Analysis and Monitoring: Teachers record lesson progress and mastery data, which NIFDI consultants review off-site during the weeks they are not on site. The school management team (lead administrator, building coordinator, and coaches) participates in weekly conference calls with NIFDI consultants to review progress and problems and determine the tasks for the coming week.

DI Curricular Solutions to Specific Problems: NIFDI includes the senior authors of the DI programs who can create specialized materials to solve particular instructional problems, including teacher and student prep materials for standardized tests.

Schoolwide Behavior Management: Schoolwide behavior management and motivation procedures may be put in place that help eliminate negative behaviors and reinforce appropriate behaviors.

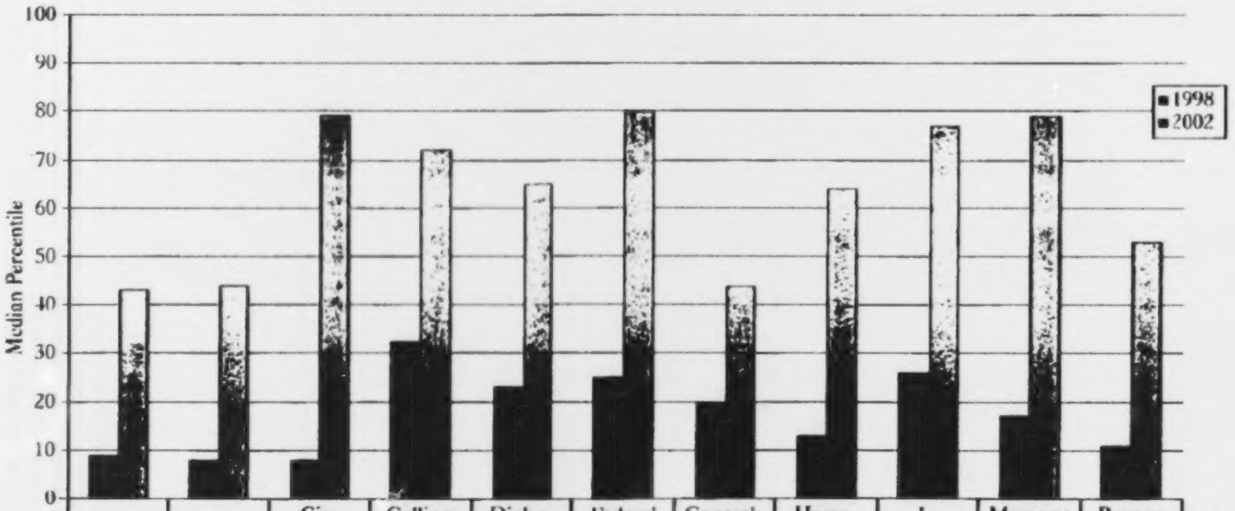
Building Capacity at the District: NIFDI works with the district to build its capacity to oversee and support the DI implementation in schools.

A Focus on Acceleration: All of the components listed above lead either directly or indirectly to the acceleration of student performance, which allows for a low performing school to be transformed into a higher performing one.

One of NIFDI's schools, City Springs Elementary in Baltimore, MD, was one of the lowest performing schools in Baltimore until it implemented the NIFDI model. Before working with NIFDI, no students at City Springs had ever passed the state assessment exam. In 2001, after working with NIFDI for 4 years, 42.4% of the students passed the exam, nearly double the city average of 22.5%. Between 2000 and 2001 the school's scores increased by 23.5 points, the largest increase in the city, and an increase larger than the city's average score. In 2002 City Springs became the second Baltimore school ever to be removed from the state's list of low performing schools. The Principal of City Springs,

**NIFDI Table 2**

*CTBS Math Scores in NIFDI Baltimore Schools*
*1st Grade*



| | Arundel | Barrister | City Springs | Colling. Square | Dickey Hill | Federal Hill | General Wolfe | Hamp. Hill | L. Hughes | Margaret Brent | Rayner Browne |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1998 | 9 | 8 | 8 | 32 | 23 | 25 | 20 | 13 | 26 | 17 | 11 |
| 2002 | 43 | 44 | 79 | 72 | 65 | 80 | 44 | 64 | 77 | 79 | 53 |

Bernice Whelchel, has since testified to the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce on the importance of implementing a research-based curriculum. Most recently, she was one of eight principals honored by President Bush at the anniversary celebration of the signing of the No Child Left Behind Act at the White House on January 9, 2003. Principal Whelchel received the ADI Excellence in Education Award in 2001, and City Springs and Hampstead Hill (another NIFDI school in Baltimore) received the ADI Excellent School Award the same year.

To learn more about NIFDI, the *Developer's Guidelines*, costs associated with working with NIFDI, and additional details associated with their model, contact:

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ADI thanks the individuals at each of the aforementioned companies for completing the surveys and providing the information for this piece.

MARTIN A. KOZLOFF, University of North Carolina, Wilmington

# Martin's Musings

## *Seeing is Believing Versus Believing is Seeing: The Fundamental Problem in Education*

Folks in the know about family systems say that trivial arguments at dinner ("I ask five times before she passes the salt!") are about something bigger—for example, one person's willingness to satisfy another person's needs. In other words, skirmishes are nested within battles, and battles are nested within wars. That's the case in education, which is divided between two main camps:

1. The current education establishment—so-called "progressive" educators (constructivists, whole languagists, advocates of "developmentally appropriate practices," postmodernists) who occupy positions of power and influence.
2. The education anti-establishment—so-called traditionalists or "instructivists" (Finn & Ravitch, 1996) who advocate focused, logically progressive, teacher-led instruction aimed at mastery of classical ideas and skills, and who challenge the ideas underlying progressive education and offer clear field-tested alternatives. Instructivists include advocates of Direct Instruction (commercial curricula), direct instruction (Rosenshine, 1986; Rosenshine & Stevens, 1986), applied behavior analysis, and Precision Teaching.

What sorts of conflicts are there between these two camps?

First, there are **skirmishes** about **details of teaching**—for example, whether students should be taught to sound out words as the primary strategy (instructivists), or taught to use context cues (the shape of a word, the placement of a word in a sentence) to guess what words say (constructivists). Or, in math, whether students should **first** master elementary skills **before** they try to solve problems that **require** the elementary skills (instructivists), or learn the elementary skills in the context of solving problems (constructivists)—which means that students have to learn **both** elementary skills **and** problem solving strategies at the same time.

These **skirmishes** are embedded in larger **curricular battles.** For example, traditionalist–instructivists see reading and math, for example, as knowledge systems that contain meanings and truths independent of what individuals may think, and therefore regard education as a means of bringing students **into** those systems via teacher-directed instruction. Constructivists, in contrast, see reading (literature) and math as having no truths or meanings apart from individuals; the meaning of a novel is constructed by readers; mathematical truths are matters of group negotiation. Therefore, the teacher's role is not to transmit meanings and truths (which are said to have no independent existence) but to help students to construct these.

Curricular battles over reading, math, history, science, and other bodies of knowledge are embedded in a larger **war over social agendas and the social functions of education.** For example, "progressive educators" believe that education in a democratic, technically advanced, affluent society should be about (a) self-development for both teachers and students, fostered in a quasi-therapeutic, "student-centered" environment; (b) the promotion of (their vision of) social justice; and (c) liberation of the individual from the allegedly repressive and self-stifling coercive force of social institutions and external bodies of knowledge.

In contrast, instructivist–traditionalists believe that education in a democratic, technically advanced, affluent society **must** be about the preservation and perfection of democratic social institutions and the intellectual and moral development of the individual (the two being inseparable) by ensuring that individuals acquire the knowledge systems required for their society's functioning, and that persons learn how to think skillfully (reason) so that they (knowing how to judge the adequacy of information and argumentation) will be able to make wise and morally good personal and societal choices.

Yet, it would be a mistake to think that the skirmishes (about method), battles (over curricula), and war (over the functions of education) are merely differences in the research bases used, instructional styles preferred, or personal and group opinions and philosophies of the two camps—differences that could perhaps be reconciled with more reading, more research, and more discussion. The two camps are opposed in a more fundamental way; namely, **the quality of intellect itself** as that intellect is directed towards investigating and communicating about **reality and knowledge.** Indeed, the evidence will show that at this level differences between traditionalists–instructivists and progressivist–constructivists can be accurately rendered by the opposing terms rational versus irrational, reasonable versus unreasonable, coherent versus incoherent, metaphysically healthy versus metaphysically demented. Let's see some of the evidence.

## The World as Fact Versus Fancy

One mark of maturity (and sanity) is recognizing and acting on the assumption that the world—reality—has features independent of what we may believe and wish those features to be. Here we see the first clear difference in intellect between traditionalist–instructivists and progressivist–constructivists. The traditionalist–instructivist—whether a teacher, school principal, district administrator, education professor, or member of a state department of public instruction—reads the announcements, legislation, regulations, and grant proposal forms for No Child Left Behind and Reading First, and then (treating these as immutable facts) adapts his or her behavior accordingly by (a) determining the real-world consequences of, for example, writing a Reading First proposal that **conforms** to the guidelines versus does not conform to the guidelines; (b) improving teacher training, evaluation, and supervision to meet the requirements of No Child Left Behind; and (c) collecting objective data (i.e., data capable of assessment by others besides the data collector) on student achievement.

> *One mark of maturity (and sanity) is recognizing and acting on the assumption that the world—reality—has features independent of what we may believe and wish those features to be.*

In marked contrast, the progressivist–constructivist school principal, district administrator, education professor, or state department of public instruction official who (resembling a petulant child) feels his or her power threatened by the external authority of No Child Left Behind and Reading First, responds by (a) **thinking wishfully** that these will simply go away and therefore may be ignored; (b) writes grant proposals that **fly in the face** of the requirements of the funding agencies, but believes this will not be noticed (akin to a mad person who believes his tin foil hat makes him invisible); and (c) **changes the definitions of words**—as if doing so does not violate their common meanings. For example, "scientific research" for the progressivist–constructivist does not mean controlled, experimental, quantitative, replicated research using validated instruments, but instead means qualitative notetaking, because this definition enables the progressivist–constructivist (in his or her mind) to make no changes in how he or she thinks and acts.

## Action Reasonably Fitted to Circumstances

We consider it reasonable (and sane) to smash a fly with a flyswatter—a cheap, tested implement that is focused on the task at hand. We consider it madness if a person burns down his house to get the fly. The same judgment of reasonableness applies in education. For example, the traditionalist–instructivist educator (a) knows there is much basic and applied research on reading; (b) reads a good sample of that research; (c) learns there are field tested programs consistent with the preponderance of research, and that effectively teach the "big ideas" in reading (phonemic awareness, sound–symbol relationships and decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension); and therefore (d) uses these programs in his or her school, district, or state. This is called reasonable, morally responsible—and sane.

In stark contrast, the progressivist–constructivist educator (not in touch with or not accurately depicting reality) (a) does not know or does not care that there is much basic and applied research on reading; (b) does not read this research, or only reads a self-serving sample (so that his or her belief system is unchallenged); (c) fails to see that there are field tested programs consistent with the preponderance of research, or **rejects** these programs (with contempt and hauteur) because he or she does not **like** them; and (d) instead of using these programs in his or her school, district, or state (irrational), requires teachers with no training in these matters to **invent** their own curricula (unreasonable) using an ersatz assortment of basal readers, nondecodable text, qualitative assessments not aligned with what is taught, spelling books, and made up lessons—that is, a "curriculum" that is unsystematic, untested, redundant, and has glaring curricular holes. However, the immorality and fundamental dementia in all this is disguised behind words such as "teacher empowerment," "ownership," and "professional development."

### Circumspection

A sane person checks his clothing before entering a room, notes that his pants are open, and fixes it up. An intellectually insufficient person checks his pants by touching his hat, walks into the room and hears snickers of persons who notice the open pants, and says to himself, "They'll never notice." A similar thing exists in education. Rational and sane education schools (rare as bronze Spartan swords from 500 BC)—somehow blessed with a squad of traditionalist–instructivist professors who have managed to get tenure and do not fear offending constructivist–progressivist colleagues, and are aware of the low status of ed schools on college campuses, superficial teacher training and faddish ideas, and current threats posed by alternative certification—examine the ed school curriculum in light of the criticisms and threaten and systematically change core beliefs, research base, mission, rules for judging what is credible, curricula, and assessment of graduates.

Not so in education schools dominated by progressivist–constructivist educators who (a) are not aware of the criticisms and threats, or believe **everyone else** is wrong ("We need to get the word out about how good we are." In psychiatry, this is considered a delusion of grandeur.); (b) hire new faculty who sustain the school's progressivist–constructivist orientation despite the fact that this orientation is the root cause of low level of scholarship, ill-preparation of new teachers, and threat to the existence of ed schools; and (c) create even more fanciful portraits of themselves both for in-school **self-celebration** (self-delusion) and **public presentation**; e.g., calling themselves "flagships of reform," "stewards of America's children," "champions of social justice," "fostering life-long learning and reflection." At this point, demented thinking is well beyond silly and approaches suicidal.

> *We consider a person rational, sane, and competent who assumes that words and utterances signify real things and who speaks and writes in a way that coherently describes or explains the real world.*

### Word Salad and Other Possible Symptoms of Dementia

A last clear difference between traditionalist–instructivists and progressivist–constructivists is their connection to and communication about reality. We consider a person rational, sane, and competent who assumes that words and utterances signify real things and who speaks and writes in a way that coherently describes or explains the real world. In contrast, we consider a person irrational, insane, and/or incompetent who assumes that words and utterances refer to (mean) whatever he or she wants them to—or to nothing at all—and whose speaking and writing are phantasmagoric, dream-like, disjointed, and bear little relationship to the external world. The more one reads progressivist–constructivist journal articles and books, course syllabi, and ed school documents (such as mission statements and program descriptions), the more one is forced to admit that these writings bear many marks of psychiatric disorder, as described at http://216.239.39.100/search?q=cache:0KPpTR7hhyEC:mindmelt.co.uk/trickcyclists/docs/Descriptive%2520Psychopathology.doc+hebephrenic+word+salad&hl=en&ie=UTF-8

Examples include

1. Delusional thinking, or "a fixed, (usually) false or fantastic idea, held in the face of evidence to the contrary..."
2. Loose associations.
3. Palilalia, in which a perseverated word is repeated with increasing frequency.
4. Paragrammatism, or a disorder of grammatical construction.
5. Neologisms, or made-up, nonsensical words.
6. Repeated use of stock words and phrases.
7. Driveling, or "the muddling of elements within an idea to the extent that the meaning is totally obscured to the listener."
8. Word salad, or "an apparently random and illogical mixture of sounds and words."

The following quotations taken from the writings of progressivist–constructivists show striking similarities to the symptoms of serious psychiatric disorder listed above. I am not saying that these writers are mentally ill; I am merely saying that their writing (a) is similar to examples of symptoms of psychosis found in psychiatric literature, and (b) makes as much sense (and is as useful educationally) as the writings of persons suffering from severe psychiatric disorder.

The quotations immediately following are from the writings of whole language advocates, and seem to show significant detachment from the reality (the facts at hand) known to most sentient persons—the reality of how children learn to read and how they are best taught—as depicted by the preponderance of empirical (in the real, external world) research.

"Learning is continuous, spontaneous, and effortless, requiring no particular attention, conscious motivation, or specific reinforcement" (Smith, 1992, p. 432). (This may be an example of neologism. Smith has reinvented the meaning of "learning" or is simply inventing a fantastical vision of what learning is. Either way, his statement has little connection with factual reality.)

"Reading without guessing is not reading at all" (Smith, 1973). (Another example of a fanciful vision, this time applied to reading. The statement appears to be rooted firmly not in the world of external facts but in the inner world of incredible imagery and word play.)

"Reading by 'phonics' is demonstrably impossible (ask any computer)" (Smith, 1986). (Denial of obvious fact. "See that bumblebee flying over there? It's **not** flying.")

"To the fluent reader the alphabetic principle is completely irrelevant. He identifies every word (if he identifies words at all) as an ideogram" (Smith, 1973). (Most folks do not claim to know the moment to moment workings of another person's thought processes—to read minds as it were. Other persons apparently **do** think they can read minds. Some of these persons are receiving treatment.)

The next samples are consistent with descriptions of disordered thought processes. Again, I am not saying that the writers are disordered, just that their writing lends itself to that suggestion.

"We cannot understand an individual's cognitive structure without observing it interacting in a context, within a culture" (Fosnot, 1996, p. 24). (The crucial word is "it." Fosnot seems to be asserting that a cognitive structure is a real thing—not a convenient fiction—and that this thing actually **does** things, such as interacting in a context. What does it mean when a person treats fictions as if they were things?)

"From this perspective, learning is a constructive building process of meaning-making that results in reflective abstractions, producing symbols within a medium" (Fosnot, 1996, p. 27). (This sentence appears to be a string of loosely connected words that are grammatically correct but are nonsense—at least that's the way it appears. In what ways does it differ from the quite mad statement, "Learning is a constitutive process of affect-organizing that results in an inductive substratum of signs and symbols within a knowledge trajectory"?)

*(Another slice of the collective mental processes at a college of education. Note the repeated use of stock phrases—as a substitute for saying anything sensible.)*

"Meaning is constructed when awareness is created by observing and gathering information..." (Another bizarre assertion, this time from a college of education website. It appears to assert that awareness is a kind of thing that can be **created**—as if it were a bird house or a sandwich—and that this creation depends on **first** observing and gathering information. But doesn't that depend on awareness? What do we think of the mental processes of people who get dressed and then take a shower—in other words, do it in reverse order?)

"Professional knowledge is advanced by the human need to engage in inquiry." (Also from a college of education website. It has the earmarks of "driveling" defined above. Forget whether humans have a need to engage in inquiry. The idea that professional knowledge is advanced by that alleged need is surely drivel.)

"Participation at the social or interpersonal plane involves social interaction between two or more people to coordinate activity face-to-face or at a distance." (This sentence, from an ed school website, is (a) a clear example of driveling; (b) shows a poverty of ideas [as if it were a big insight that social interaction involves two or more people]; and (3) asserts bizarre notions; e.g., that the purpose of social interaction is to coordinate activity—when social interaction **IS** that activity.)

"Our student-centered professional development model is predicated on the belief... Our student-centered professional development model rests on the following assumptions... Our student-centered professional development model emphasizes the dynamic nature... Our student-centered professional development model emphasizes the types of knowledge..." (Another slice of the collective mental processes at a college of education. Note the repeated use of stock phrases—as a substitute for saying anything sensible.)

"meaning is constructed"... "meaning making"..."construct and share their own learning"... "ongoing reflection"..."reflection on their own practice"..."outlets for reflection"..."make subject matter meaningful to students"...

> "creates learning experiences"... "meaningful learning experiences"..."managing the learning environment"..."reflective, inquiry-oriented"..."engage in inquiry"..."reflection and inquiry into their own practices"..."critical, reflective, inquiring learners"..."teacher preparation...is reflective"..."Think reflectively"...(More from ed school websites, showing perseveration and palilalia in the use of the same words and stock phrases.)

> "The Lubyanka College of Education (not the real name) is dedicated to preparing you to teach in the real world." (This wins the prize for the most disconnected from reality.)

Contrast the above driveling, palilalic, perseverative, loosely connected and otherwise bizarre assertions with a few lines from the works of traditionalist–instructivist writers.

> "Teachers should make explanations brief and concise." (Stein, Silbert, & Carnine, 1997).

> "The essential characteristic of any good signal is its clarity." (Stein, Silbert, & Carnine, 1997).

> "Because simple facts have but one example, namely themselves, there can be no actual range of examples." (Kameenui & Simmons, 1990).

> "The overt sound blending phase continues until the reader accurately and consistently decodes words at a rate of one letter per second." (Kameenui & Simmons, 1990).

> "Decoding—is the central skill in initial reading." (Engelmann, Haddox, & Bruner, 1983).

> "After each teacher presentation, students should be asked to model *positive* examples for each behavioral rule." (Walker, Colvin, & Ramsey, 1994).

I believe we are able to make the following generalization: In marked contrast to the writing of traditionalist–instructivist educators, progressivist–constructivist writing (and probably thinking—as that is what is written) is often incoherent, illogical, disconnected from the external world in which assertions can be tested, and is in many ways describable with a list of symptoms of psychiatric disorder. Several implications follow. (a) It is no use reasoning with these persons and groups. They have created and live within a different and a dream-like reality, with different rules of verification and falsification. (b) Just as dangerous mental patients should not have the keys to the drug locker, these persons and groups should not be allowed to miseducate children, mistrain teachers, or infect educational policy with their delusional system.

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DON CRAWFORD, Otter Creek Institute

# Top Ten Teaching Errors

In my experience all kids, not mentally handicapped, can learn from one pass through the DI materials, but only if the teaching is top notch. The less able the students the better the teaching must be. Here's my top 10 list of errors that I see teachers make most frequently. Teachers can become top notch by avoiding these errors.

**10. Kids not answering together on signal the first time all of the time.** Low performers being allowed to "chime in" late saying the same thing the "leaders" said without being able to do it the first time themselves. (Dead give away is when the "leaders" give a wrong answer and everyone else says it too!) Even when teachers repeat every time that students don't all answer together, it means nothing because parroting an answer somebody just said is easy. Low performers in this situation are not learning the material; they are only mindlessly parroting what the "leaders" are saying—so they don't really learn. This often happens when the teacher lets the higher performers set the pace of responding. Instead the teacher must make kids hold the answer in their head until the signal is given. (See also #5.)

9. **Slow pacing.** The teacher takes up more time between kid responses than he/she should. Teachers add extra talk, take time to read the script, stop too long for comments on behavior (especially criticizing bad behavior) and the kids are left to sit and wait for something to do. Many teachers think that as long as they keep up a patter that the kids are benefiting from their "show." More effective groups spend more time with kids answering—and the kids are getting to answer from 10 to 20 questions per minute, every minute of the lesson. Slow pacing on the teacher's part reliably produces a lot of off-task fooling around and interruptions from the kids. But more importantly, the less able students are more likely to stop paying attention and will miss more of the lessons when pacing is slow. See #8.

8. **Low performers not paying attention to the lesson and no intervention in place to ensure that they do pay attention.** Not paying attention leads to nonparticipation which leads to #7.

7. **Low performers not participating and not being asked to participate.** Kids with a lot of prior school failure often enter instruction with a mindset that "I can't do it, so I won't try." If teachers don't get past that initial reluctance and show such learners they can learn THIS stuff then these reluctant learners will "sit out" of the lessons and will not progress as needed. Less able students MUST participate in order to learn this material.

6. **Not part firming.** Errors occur, or kids don't answer, and the teacher may or may not correct the mistake, but then just goes on in the lesson. Part firming requires that the teacher go back and re-do any part where there was an error so that the kids get a chance to do it 100% correct. The responsibility of the students is to get it 100% correct. The teacher's job is to give them the chance to repeat the part until they do. Everyone should be clear on that mission.

5. **Not enough "think time" or "wait time" for the less able students in the group.** Teachers who are trying to move at a brisk pace sometimes shortchange the "think time" between the focus cue, "Next word" and the voice cue, "What word?" The faster kids in the group can answer but the slower ones don't answer on signal—not because they aren't trying—but because they can't think of the answer that quickly. Typically the teacher repeats the question (because not everyone answered) and the second time they all answer together. The teacher will say, "Now everyone answer on signal next time." But the problem continues. Very quickly the slower thinkers learn to wait to answer until the second time—and then they are no longer generating their own answers or learning the material—they are just parroting what the other kids said on the first try. Just a slight increase in think time and they will all be able to generate the answer and then repetitions can be limited to times when they just don't know the material—which should happen less than 10% of the time!

4. **Letting the low kids "slide," not holding them accountable for giving the correct answer every time.** This starts with a kid who is unmotivated (see above) or is misplaced "because we don't have another group for him." Misplaced kids can't be held accountable for being firm on each part as you go—because they're misplaced. Unmotivated kids often aren't held accountable because they put up too much of a fuss. Then you develop the problem of not being able to hold the whole group accountable because of that one kid. Soon the teacher behavior spreads to other groups and you have several kids who "slide" through the lessons without really learning.

3. **Repeating parts all the time as a standard response to kids not paying attention rather than as a response to what ought to be unusual incorrect responses from students.** The kids aren't paying attention so someone makes an error or some don't answer—nearly every time. So the teacher just repeats and repeats almost every part of the lesson. Everyone gets bored and so they pay less attention and make more errors and the problem continues. The teacher must increase student motivation for getting it right the first time, get the kids to be clearer about their answers, and avoid unnecessary repetition if they all know it.

2. **Repeating parts all the time because the teacher is in doubt about whether the students were answering correctly so they repeat the part.** The responses get better only because the kids are saying the same thing for the second or third time. The teacher must increase student motivation for getting it right the first time, get the kids to be clearer about their answers, and avoid unnecessary repetition if they all know it. Sometimes individual turns rather than a group repetition are better if the teacher is unsure of whether they all "got it" or not.

1. **Compromises on all of the above due to weakness in behavior management.** Teachers don't teach the way they should because the kids are resistant and the teachers don't have the skills to overcome that resistance. So they compromise on corrections, part firming, clear responses, and unison responses, etc. The groups are reduced to "going through the motions" of the lessons without a clear sense of the mission for learning. More able kids still learn the material, but the less able kids don't because they didn't participate and try and get the corrective feedback they needed.

DON CRAWFORD, Otter Creek Institute

# *Successfully Decoding Unknown Words: What's the Teacher's Role?*

**"Let's all work together to avoid the phrase, 'sound it out'!"**—admonition in training materials put out by California State University San Bernardino

The "balanced" reading programs that are the descendants of whole language programs are designed around children reading silently and independently from the very early stages of reading instruction. Little time is spent reading in teacher-directed groups. Instead, children spend most of their reading time reading silently to themselves in self-chosen, but leveled books. In this arrangement teachers are unable to preteach all the words children will encounter. Instead of teaching words, they are attempting to teach "strategies" for the children to decode unknown words without assistance. This is a difficult task indeed, made more difficult by the widespread adherence to the "three-cueing system."

In comprehending text it is rightly understood that readers combine information from semantics (word meanings), syntax (word order), and the graphophonemic system (letters and sounds) to make ultimate sense of a passage. However, this idea has been incorrectly taken to mean that one could rely on syntax or semantic clues to determine the correct identification of a word. As Marilyn Adams (1997) noted, "If the original premise of the three-cueing system was that the reason for reading the words is to understand the text, it has since been oddly converted such that, in effect, the reason for understanding the text is in order to figure out the words."

The net result is that the strategies being recommended by teachers for decoding unknown words are counterproductive because they direct student's attention away from the letters and towards the context and other spurious clues. One might summarize them as, "Try anything but looking carefully at the word." Figure 1 shows a typical set of prescriptions for parents to use with their children from

**Figure 1**

*Common recommendations for decoding unknown words.*
*http://www.misd.wednet.edu/~joanna_franklin/html/resources.html*

**Efficient readers can use all three-cueing systems. Weak readers tend to over rely on just one cueing system. Since no single strategy works all the time, weak readers have a harder time figuring out unknown words.**

Encourage your child to use a variety of strategies. Some strategies may be more appropriate than others, depending on the situation.

Graphophonemic strategies

- Break the word into parts. Look for word families, known suffixes, syllables.
- Match letters and letter combinations with the sounds they make.

Syntactic strategies

- Ask the question, "Do the words sound right, as if I were talking?"

Semantic strategies

- Use the story's illustrations.
- Make a meaningful substitution, e.g., say "home" for "house." Warning: If a child makes too many substitutions, that child is not reading the story.
- Skip the word and come back to it. Then reread the sentence and use the context of the story to figure out the mystery word.
- Ask the question, "Is what I'm reading making sense?"
- Ask the question, "Does the word work in the story?"

the Mercer Island, Washington, school district website.

The key to understanding why these strategies will not help the struggling reader to decode words independently lies in the second box where the school district cautions, "Some strategies may be more appropriate than others, depending on the situation." For example, if the reader is trying to decode the word "them," using the story's illustrations won't be much help. If the rest of the sentence tells you what the word ought to be then skipping the word and coming back to it might work. For example, "Looking through his xxx, the astronomer gazed at the stars." Unfortunately in a lot of sentences context does not work (Mary gave Bill a xxx). However, if the teacher is helping the child and knows that the word xxx is in the picture at the top of the page where it shows Mary giving it to Bill, the teacher might suggest, "Try looking at the picture." Conversely, if the teacher knows the word is not in the picture, she might suggest a different strategy—one "more appropriate to the situation." In fact, the choice of which strategy to use is not dependent upon the situation—it's dependent upon already knowing the word's identity! In theory children could run down the list of possible strategies until they find one that works—but again, if the children truly do not know the word, what's to prevent them from using one of the strategies to get an incorrect answer?

In Direct Instruction programs we use strategies designed to help children remember a word's identity rather than to discover it. We know that looking at the letters and using sound–symbol relationships is the only reliable way to remember which word is which. A word's identity is not dependent upon either the context or the syntax or its semantics. A word's identity is defined by the letters and their sequence[1]

However, and here's the rub, kids cannot reliably "sound out" all words from the most common sounds of the 26 letters in our alphabet. There are sound combinations which sometimes apply and sometimes don't. There are many rules and they all have exceptions. There are many word analogies and patterns to be learned that aren't readily summarized by tidy rules. So we can't teach a kid a reasonable number of phonics strategies and turn him loose in some trade books to implement these strategies for "independently decoding unknown words." That's where the "balanced literacy" reading specialists are right when they say phonics don't work—because they expect phonics to enable children to read independently without assistance in identifying new words. Even phonics don't work consistently enough for children to be able to figure out all the words on their own, especially the common words which tend to be irregular, and especially in the beginning of learning to read.

*In Direct Instruction programs we use strategies designed to help children remember a word's identity rather than to discover it.*

However, there is a strategy that is absolutely critical for later successful independent reading. Looking at and attending to all the letters in each word to determine its identity is a strategy we need to develop to the point of automaticity in readers. Even if "done" and "bore" are not sounded out exactly the same, it is only by looking carefully at the letters that the reader can tell which is which, every time—even in the absence of any context clues.

So what should teachers do for helping children to decode unknown words? We recommend directly teaching each and every word ahead of time, in teacher-led instruction, so that the right strategy can be used to remember the word's identity. In the very beginning (*Reading Mastery I*) we present and then "sound out" regular words blending the most common sounds of each letter—which sound–symbol relationships, have of course, been previously taught. Later we present words with sound combinations, using cues (connected letters in some programs, underlined letters in others) to help children remember that there is a sound combination in the word.

What about irregular words? Over time irregular words are handled differently, which makes clear the intent of our process. In the beginning we teach children to say the most common sounds in the irregular words—and then remember that the actual pronunciation is "funny." For example "said" is "sounded out" as sssaaaaiiiid (pronouncing all the letters) but, "Here's how we say the word—sed." When I first read the instructions to do it that way, it seemed to me like a risky way to teach—one that would likely lead to confusion. Nevertheless, I tried it exactly as written. A couple of weeks later, I remember listening in amazement as my lowest reader came to the word "said," and intoned, "Ssss-aaaa-iiii-d." (Back then I didn't know they weren't supposed to stop between sounds.) Then she paused a second and then called out, "Oh. Said" (pronouncing it correctly). Why did that work? Then I realized that there was no way for her to be confused—

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[1] Yes, it is true that a very few sets of letters (such as b-o-w) can be more than one word. Almost all the time, however, the identity of any word can be known by its letters.

there was only one "ssss-aaa-iiii-d" in the universe and it was always pronounced as "sed." By making the children "sound-out" the word each time, they develop the habit of looking at all the letters before deciding the identity of the word. This, ultimately, is the critical behavior.

A slightly different strategy is used after the names of the letters have been learned by *Reading Mastery III* or in programs like *Corrective Reading* that assume that children know the names of the letters. In those lessons the teacher tells the children what the word is, and then the children are asked to spell the word while looking at it. In other words, we ask them to say the names of the letters while looking at them. And then we ask, "What word did you spell?" This procedure is used for introduction of new, unknown words as well as for corrections. Clearly the point is to direct the student's attention to the letters of the word—after reminding the child of the word's identity. By the time students have learned a couple hundred regular and common words it is no longer necessary or productive to require students to "sound out" each word, especially if one were to rely on the single most common sound of each letter. And by then, if we have taught well, they have what Virginia Berninger (2002) calls a Reading Brain—they can learn new words easily with very few repetitions. And although they can often get close to the correct pronunciation independently, even good readers still benefit from the teacher telling them the identity of an "unknown" word. Teaching works! *ADI*

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LINDA CARNINE

# *Amanda's Story*

The main purpose of this article is to provide a teaching example—a model for what a parent can do to enhance the capabilities of a child. This story results from the legacy of two pioneers in education, Siegfried (Zig) Engelmann and Wes Becker. Years ago Wes Becker wrote *Parents are Teachers*, which laid the foundation for how parents, as a child's first teachers, can provide positive, effective instruction at home. Meanwhile, his colleague, Zig Engelmann, and his support staff have worked for the last 35 years to develop instructional programs that are effective with all types of learners, particularly diverse learners with cognitive challenges, such as Amanda.

Amanda, at the age of 8, won the 2001 Wayne Carnine Most Improved Student Award showing the greatest improvement in Direct Instruction learning over that year. Amanda's story can serve as a model for how committed parents, teaching children with disabilities at critical stages of development, can actually restructure the child's learning capabilities and greatly widen their intellectual horizons. Through patience, persistence, and the use of Direct Instruction curricula, Amanda's mother, Marsha, taught Amanda how to *learn*. If parents want to enhance the learning capabilities of their child with disabilities beyond what teachers are able to do in school, this story will provide a road map for how that can be accomplished.

Blond-haired, blue-eyed Amanda was born with what is vaguely termed "developmental delays." According to her mother, she did not hit any of the milestones that all parents brag about to their friends. She did not walk, talk, or sing at the age other children did. She never questioned what occurred around her, never asked the usual "why?" that most children utter endlessly. Amanda was always 2 years behind her peers, but, thought her mother, what does it matter? When she turns 18 no one will know or care how old she was when she took her first steps or learned to talk. Delays are nothing in the larger scheme of things.

*Amanda Bhirdo*

*Marsha Rodman*

When Amanda was 4 she was placed in a special education Headstart program. Although Headstart ostensibly targets academics, some evidence suggests that children leaving Headstart know less in some academic areas than when they entered the program. Amanda finished her first year in Headstart well behind her peers and was encouraged by her teacher to stay another year. When she entered first grade she was still academically and socially far behind her peers. According to her mother, "First grade was a disaster."

Typically, when children like Amanda are placed in special education, whether mainstreamed or self-contained, they often make only modest academic gains. There is simply not enough instructional time to provide the systematic, explicit instruction in all academic areas to allow those with special needs to catch up, let alone keep up, with their peers. If these children are mainstreamed, they usually end up receiving separate individual instruction from a paraprofessional in a whole class setting. This is not a criticism of special education instruction in the public schools; there are many talented and committed special education teachers. But no matter how skilled, committed, or talented a special education teacher may be, he or she simply cannot make the same progress for a special needs child that one determined and skilled caregiver like Marsha can. There are simply not enough minutes in the school day for a teacher to devote to the intensive, systematic direct instruction that Marsha gave her daughter for several years.

When the school evaluated Amanda her IQ was estimated at 63, and she was diagnosed with Infantile Autism. The school psychologist offered these discouraging words to her parents. "You don't seem to understand. She is mildly mentally retarded, and she will never be a rocket scientist or an engineer. All you can hope for is your daughter to get a mediocre job when she is an adult. She might peak out mentally as an 11-year-old, with a reading capability of maybe a third grader." But the psychologist's candid prognosis did not deter Marsha. Instead, these became "fightin' words" to Amanda's determined mother.

Marsha had heard about the effectiveness of the Direct Instruction curriculum for low-performing children. She contacted a McGraw-Hill, SRA representative, Rodney Kerr, who provided her with beginning Direct Instruction materials and the training needed to implement the instruction with Amanda. By this time Amanda was floundering in second grade special education. She was easily frustrated and discouraged with lessons. Amanda would come home from school and go directly to bed. She spoke in a monotone voice and rarely smiled. Halfway through the school year, Marsha pulled Amanda out of second grade and enrolled her in a private kindergarten class. Even though Amanda was 2 years older than the other children, kindergarten afforded Amanda an opportunity to continue developing socially at her own level.

Amanda now spent mornings in kindergarten and afternoons with her mother in an intensive home schooling program. Marsha began intensive, systematic instruction using DI *Reading Mastery I* and *Language for Learning*. Amanda's first attitude was, "I can't do this!" Amanda at times would hide under the table and Marsha would have to force her out to do the program. Marsha didn't give up. Nevertheless, Marsha estimated that it took around 1,000 repetitions to teach Amanda the first few sentence forms in the *Language for Learning* program.

> *After several weeks, Marsha noticed Amanda's confidence and enthusiasm toward the instruction dramatically increasing because she was given tasks that she could perform successfully.*

Starting with simple sentences in response to the identification question, "What is this?" Amanda learned to produce identity sentences such as, "This is a table" (clock, desk, pencil, orange, tree, vehicle). She then moved to more involved syntactic patterns in action statements such as, "We are standing up," "He is touching his nose," and much later, "You are clapping your hands and tapping your foot." Amanda learned higher-order thinking in basic concepts of part–whole relations (a pencil has a point; a pencil has a shaft; a pencil has an eraser). She also learned hierarchical thinking by classifying objects, another higher-order thinking skill. This also allowed her to expand her vocabulary with various objects in the categories of vehicles, containers, animals, clothing, food, buildings, and furniture.

Probably one of the most difficult initial concepts for Amanda to learn was the individual sounds various letters make. It took Amanda over 3 years to be able to recognize letter sounds. She came into the DI program knowing two to three sound–letter correspondences, but consistent recall was limited. Starting with easily discriminable letters, (m, s, a, t, e), Marsha had to correct hundreds of errors Amanda made confusing these squiggles. But after a few weeks in *Reading Mastery I*, Amanda began remembering enough of these correspondences accurately in order to start reading simple words. Repetition along with short, frequent opportunities to practice identifying and using the sounds during the daily lesson in the *Reading Mastery* materials allowed Amanda to build this retention. Marsha began seeing the same progress in early lessons of *Connecting Math Concepts* where Amanda now had to identify the squiggles as numerals under 10.

None of this progress came easily at first. It required maximum patience on Marsha's part, and firm persistence. At first Amanda would work for only a minute or two. Then Marsha would give her a tangible reward, a small piece of food and stickers for her sticker book. Gradually these were phased out to points on a chart to earn rewards. She provided frequent, specific praise for Amanda's performance of the tasks in the programs. Marsha also employed multi-sensory techniques learned from Michigan Dyslexia Institute, Lindamood-Bell Learning Processes, and Wilson Reading Programs, which she felt contributed to increasing Amanda's attending behavior.

After several weeks, Marsha noticed Amanda's confidence and enthusiasm toward the instruction dramatically increasing because she was given tasks that she could perform successfully. By carefully teaching the *Reading Mastery* program, Marsha taught Amanda the phonological skills necessary for beginning reading, and the phonics skills for sounding out words using the carefully sequenced lessons. Amanda's language skills also improved and she started to understand some abstract concepts in *Language for Learning* such as, "later," "before," and "only." The language repetition tasks continued to be the most difficult for Amanda to master, which is typically the case. Yet the work that Marsha did with her to enable Amanda to repeat complex syntactic forms was essential for Amanda's later growth in reading comprehension.

The early math concepts proved to be easier for Amanda to grasp. In math she mastered the subskills of counting and number recognition more easily and progressed to performing two-digit column addition and subtraction problems before the end of the year. She was even able to figure out mental math problems such as 45 + 3 and 20 + 30.

The transformation in Amanda's attitude toward learning new things was also dramatic. She no longer napped when she got home from school. Amanda began drawing pictures that were vibrantly colorful and detailed. Earlier, the occupational therapist had set a goal for Amanda to include three objects in her drawings. Amanda's new artwork far surpassed this goal. The transformation occurred not only in academic and psychological areas, it affected her socialization as well. She developed many friendships, was always smiling, loved going to school, and was happier at home.

Along with the social skills, Amanda's physical skills also took a leap forward. As Marsha reported, "Somehow after Direct Instruction rewired her brain for language, it also kicked into gear her sensory integration struggles." She has learned to play hopscotch, ride a bike with training wheels, and tie her shoes. In fact, just last month she went to see her occupational therapist for a 1-year reevaluation. The OT (with 25 years experience) was surprised at the progress. She said, "I am truly amazed! I've never seen such improvement in a child after 1 year. Her body protection issues have substantially diminished; her balance and coordination have improved. She is stronger, more focused, less hyper. She has developed good listening and comprehension skills, and can sit quietly and attentively. She is not the same little girl I started with."

Marsha filled out a nomination for the Wayne Carnine Student Improvement Award for the 2001 Direct Instruction conference. In the application Marsha described the incredible improvement Amanda had made since she had been learning in the Direct Instruction programs. Marsha explained that the psychiatrist, who had originally diagnosed Amanda with Infantile Autism, was speechless when he completed the evaluation. He said, "I've been in the practice for over 30 years and I've never seen anything like it. It appears you just worked your daughter out of Infantile Autism. Whatever you are doing, I suggest you do more of it. Miracles don't happen every day."

*The transformation in Amanda's attitude toward learning new things was also dramatic.*

At the psychiatrist's suggestion, Marsha continued to work with Amanda using Direct Instruction. The following year she decided to continue home schooling Amanda and complete at least two levels of the Direct Instruction programs in 1 year. They completed *Reading Mastery I* and *Language for Learning*. Then they continued with *Reading Mastery II*, *Language for Thinking*, *Spelling Mastery A* and *B*, *Reasoning and Writing A* and *B*, and *Connecting Math Concepts A* and *B*. It took Amanda and her mother 6 to 8 hours of intensive, systematic daily instruction in order to do this.

When they reached the middle of *Reading Mastery II*, Amanda announced, "Mom, I don't need you any more. I can read." Not only did she announce it, she demonstrated it as well. According to her mother, Amanda "marched into her bedroom" and began to read nonstop. Within 4 days she had read over 800 pages. "That was such an exciting week," said Marsha, "She was reading for over 6 hours a day, and it didn't matter what she read. Her absolute favorite books were my old Dick and Jane books. In fact, I got on eBay and found her the entire Dick and Jane readers. These are chapter books and she is reading at a second grade level."

Amanda's favorite program is *Reasoning and Writing* and she wants to do that subject first. She has more difficulty with *Spelling Mastery* and the *Language for Thinking*. She continues to struggle with repeating complex sentences, but is successful with effort. Her attention span, which averaged about 3 minutes at the beginning of the school year, is up to 1.5 hours without a break.

All of this anecdotal information suggests that Amanda has learned a great deal. But there is also documented evidence of her academic success. Amanda was recently administered the Stanford Achievement Test for Grade 1. She performed above the national average, at the 59th percentile for reading comprehension. On the content cluster analysis, Amanda was again above average on the Short Passages (Cloze) and average on all other clusters except riddles. Her math performance is below average, but she has clearly improved, performing at the 19th percentile on problem solving and the 14th percentile on procedures.

Marsha knew Amanda could perform well with one-on-one instruction, but that wasn't good enough anymore. The question was whether she could survive in a classroom setting outside of the special education program. During the last quarter of the school year, Amanda was placed back into first grade at Plantation Key Elementary School. Her report card also confirmed Amanda's progress. She made progress

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in all academic areas and received commendations in art, music, physical education, Spanish, study skills, and citizenship. Amanda was awarded the Superintendent's Young Reader's Award in May 2002. She had read over 6,000 pages on her own by this time. Now Amanda is able to perform with her grade level peers and has been assimilated into their social culture.

In summary, the "road map" pioneered by Amanda and her mother consists of:

1. Participation in preschool and kindergarten with emphasis on oral language and vocabulary development;
2. Additional academic tutoring for 1 to 2 hours/day during kindergarten;
3. Home schooling with intensity during first grade (6–8 hours/day);
4. Reintroduction into school setting during latter quarter of first grade with child performing on grade level curriculum and participating long with peers; and
5. Continuation in second grade with continued support in Direct Instruction tutoring at home.

Amanda's story is not unique. Other parents have followed this roadmap. Amanda's mother began additional home teaching when she observed her child not thriving academically and socially. Initially it was a struggle to get Amanda to work every day, but when Amanda started succeeding at the academic tasks, her success started to change her learning curve. She basically began to learn how to learn.

The critical message is that if a parent wants to make a significant difference in the learning curve for their handicapped child, the extra effort must start early. It must be intensive and positive to result in accomplishments such as Amanda's. Now Amanda is a life-long learner. As Marsha remarked, "Amanda may be like a barge in water, slowly plugging along, but she is steady and she will succeed."

- Marsha Rodman graduated from the University of Michigan in Civil Engineering in 1982 and worked 18 years as a civil engineer in southern California. Once Marsha determined she had children with learning challenges, she refocused her energies on special education. She is now the owner and director of Swan Learning Institute specializing in reading, math, and language development for individuals with dyslexia, autism, ADHD, and other learning difficulties. If you have further questions about how to implement Direct Instruction programs in a home tutorial setting, you may contact Marsha Rodman at her website: www.swanlearning.org

**Author Note**

The author would like to thank Margaret Ashworth for her editing assistance in the preparation of this article. ADI

## *A letter from the field*

*This letter was sent to the ADI Board of Directors in May 2002.*

Dear Board,

I am the Grandmother of a third-grade student at Pearl (MS) School. My Grandson, Tate White, has struggled in reading since the first grade. He worried all the time that he was not as smart as all the other kids because of his reading. I am proud to say this reading program has turned his life around. I have lunch with Tate every Tuesday. His reading teacher came to me after Christmas and told me Tate was reading on a third-grade level. I am so proud of his power, yes power, now that he can read! Thank you so much for if nothing else, the program has reached this child.

Sincerely,
Cindy East

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KATHLEEN M. WALDRON-SOLER and ANGELA PRZYCHODZIN-HAVIS, Eastern Washington University

# *Review of the Reading Mastery Training Series*

The *Reading Mastery Training Series* is a new package of 12 videotapes published by Science Research Associates (*Reading Mastery VHS Training Series*: ISBN # 0-07-584122-3, $129.00). Within an hour, viewers can watch the first four videotapes to learn about the basic philosophy of *Reading Mastery*, general teaching practices that facilitate student success in the program, and teacher prerequisite skills that must be learned before program implementation. The next seven videotapes offer viewers the opportunity to watch teachers model various formats and signals with small groups of students. Viewers can then practice the formats and signals along with the videotape. The training series ends with a videotape of examples of the implementation of various workbook and storybook formats.

The following sections provide a summary of each videotape and a critique of the *Reading Mastery Training Series*.

# *Videotape Summaries*

## Videotape #1: The Paths to Literacy

This videotape provides an introduction to the *Reading Mastery* program and an explanation of the following key programmatic elements used to ensure successful beginning readers in the program: (a) instructional groups, (b) signals and unison responding, and (c) sounds and blending. Five kindergarten teachers using the *Reading Mastery* program relate their personal experiences with the implementation of the program. These teachers guide viewers through the remainder of the series as they learn how to use the sounds, signals, and scripts of *Reading Mastery*.

## Videotape #2: Why Is Reading So Hard?

This videotape provides a brief, but highly informative explanation of the process students go through when learning to read. The videotape begins with a comparison of how written text must look to a young child versus a literate adult. The narrator explains that what initially looks like "squiggles on paper" to young children must be related to something they already know—speech. Viewers learn of the importance of phonemic awareness instruction in a beginning reading program and examples of phonemes in the English language are given. The fact that some letters have multiple sounds associated with them and the confusion this can cause when learning to read is discussed. Viewers learn that *Reading Mastery* changes the look of some of the letters to help reduce the confusion of which sounds are associated with certain letter symbols. Viewers are shown that *Reading Mastery* initially focuses on teaching the sounds associated with 40 sound symbols, but that by the end of 1 school year high performing students are able to read complex stories with normal text.

## Videotape #3: Anatomy of a *Reading Mastery* Classroom

This videotape explains and shows examples of the following eight classroom practices used in the *Reading Mastery* program to help teachers achieve success: (a) managing behavior effectively, (b) using praise not criticism, (c) setting up reading groups carefully, (d) using signals to elicit unison responding, (e) mastering scripts thoroughly, (f) monitoring closely and correcting immediately, (g) firming every child to mastery, and (h) making it fun for the kids. The five teachers introduced in *The Paths to Literacy* provide explicit guidelines and tips for implementing each of these eight classroom practices.

## Videotape #4: Countdown to Lesson One

This videotape reviews three skills that teachers must master before beginning the *Reading Mastery* program: (a) the pronunciation and blending of the 40 phonemes used in the program; (b) the use of hand signals, presentation book signals, and workbook and storybook signals; and (c) response error correction procedures.

## Videotape #5: Practice Junction: Practice the Sounds

This videotape models the correct pronunciation and mouth formation of the 40 sounds used in the program. Viewers hear one model of the sound and are then directed to "Say Along." Viewers are then asked to practice "By Yourself." During this sequence, the words "Get Ready" are flashed on the screen followed by a visual of the letter/letter combination. Finally, a verification of the sound is presented.

## Videotape #6: Practice Junction: Sounds Review/ Practice Blending

This videotape provides a review of the sounds practiced in *Practice Junction: Practice the Sounds* and practice blending sounds together. Blending is initially practiced with eight words made up of continuous sounds. Viewers are then introduced to words with continuous and stop sounds. To practice each list of words, viewers are asked to say the correct blending along with the videotape. Viewers are then asked to blend the sounds by themselves. Once a list of words has been practiced, a random review of the words is provided. Viewers are asked to blend the sounds of the word and verification of the appropriate blending is given.

## Videotapes #7–10: Signal and Scripts Lessons 1–8; Signal and Scripts Lessons 19–29; Signal and Scripts Lessons 37–56; Signal and Scripts Lessons 57–96

These four videotapes provide practice of tasks from lessons 1 through 96 in *Reading Mastery I*. Viewers are asked to follow a three-step practice sequence for each task: (a) watch and listen, (b) follow along, and (c) say along. During "Watch and Listen," a teacher models the lesson task with a small group of students. During "Follow Along," the words "Follow Along" are flashed on the screen and the task is presented again with a visual of the teacher's signal and the directions the teacher is saying aloud are flashed on the screen. The teacher's directions and student responses can also be heard. During "Say Along," the words "Say Along" are flashed on the screen and viewers see the same visual of the teacher's signal and hear the directions she is saying to the students as presented in the "Follow Along" sequence.

## Videotape #11: Practice Junction: Correction Procedures for the Early Lessons

This videotape provides practice of three correction procedures for various student response errors: (a) mispronunciation, (b) misidentification, and (c) stopping between the sounds. The error correction procedure is modeled and then viewers are asked to "Say Along" with the videotape.

## Videotape #12: Sample Workbook and Storybook Formats

This videotape presents examples of the implementation of various workbook and storybook tasks from lessons 19 through 96 with small groups of students.

## Critique of the Reading Mastery Training Series

Some concerns are evident across the training series. First, viewers are never told that the training series only focuses on *Reading Mastery I*. Second, although the videotapes refer to *Reading Mastery I and II*, viewers are never provided information about all the levels of the program. Third, although three signals are reviewed, the difference between an audible and visual signal is never explicitly described. Fourth, although corrections for response errors are provided, corrections for nonattending, nonresponding, and signal errors are not discussed. Finally, it is difficult to hear many of the kids on the last videotape, *Sample Workbook and Storybook Formats*.

Two changes to videotapes 7–10 would make them more useful during training sessions. First, viewers should be provided with explicit directions about what they are supposed to do during the "Follow Along" and "Say Along" practice sequences. Second, a workbook including copies of the teacher presentation book tasks practiced on the videotapes should be provided to viewers. This would allow viewers to actually practice the signals and read the script as they will need to do during implementation of the program. Viewers are currently asked to say the script along with the videotape. The value of this is questionable.

The teachers demonstrated a variety of delivery errors at various times across the 12 videotapes: (a) mouthing sounds while students are responding, (b) failing to provide corrections for student errors, (c) holding the teacher presentation book on the wrong side of the body, (d) signaling and speaking at the same time, (e) targeting one student during an error correction, (f) failing to make clear pull-offs from the page when signaling sounds, (g) forgetting to say "Get ready" before signaling, (h) adding a snap to the hand drop signal, and (i) presenting the hand signal with the fist facing towards the students. There is also some questionable pronunciation of sounds by the teachers. Although these errors may only be apparent to an individual experienced with the implementation of *Reading Mastery*, it is unfortunate that novice *Reading Mastery* teachers may observe and practice inappropriate implementation procedures.

Despite some of the concerns described above, this training series provides an excellent introduction to *Reading Mastery I* and the basic teaching techniques required to run the program. The series will be a valuable asset to initial *Reading Mastery I* training sessions. The teachers demonstrating the implementation of *Reading Mastery I* are sincere in their testimonials about the effectiveness of the program and demonstrate the use of *Reading Mastery* with "real" students. Viewers are able to see what the *Reading Mastery* materials look like, observe the unique ways in which each teacher implements the program, and witness the positive reactions students have to the *Reading Mastery* program.

# Little Rock Success Story

Karen Sullards, Principal of Scott Elementary in Pulaski County Special School District, Little Rock, Arkansas, submitted this impressive DI success story. After only 1 year of a DI reading implementation, the percent of students scoring below basic on the Literacy subtest of the state's Primary Benchmark Test dropped significantly and the percent scoring at basic and proficient increased significantly. Karen reports that Math scores also improved because it was the first time that the students could read the test. The numbers in Table 1 show the magnitude of the changes in Literacy and Math.

**Table 1**

*Percent of Students Scoring Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced on the Primary Benchmark Test in 2001 (Before DI Implementation) and 2002 (After 1 Year of DI Implementation) on Literacy and Math*

| | 2001 | 2002 | Change | | 2001 | 2002 | Change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Literacy | | | | Math | | | |
| Below Basic | 64 | 18 | -46 | Below Basic | 73 | 41 | -32 |
| Basic | 27 | 35 | +7 | Basic | 9 | 12 | +3 |
| Proficient | 9 | 47 | +38 | Proficient | 9 | 41 | +33 |
| Advanced | 0 | 0 | 0 | Advanced | 9 | 6 | -3 |

The school is now in its 2nd year of implementation in reading and its 1st year of implementation in language and spelling.

# *Everyone likes getting mail…*

ADI maintains a listserv discussion group called DI. This free service allows you to send a message out to all subscribers to the list just by sending one message. By subscribing to the DI list, you will be able to participate in discussions of topics of interest to DI users around the world. There are currently 500+ subscribers. You will automatically receive in your email box all messages that are sent to the list. This is a great place to ask for technical assistance, opinions on curricula, and hear about successes and pitfalls related to DI.

**To subscribe to the list, send the following message from your email account:**

To: majordomo@lists.uoregon.edu

In the message portion of the email simply type:

subscribe di

(Don't add *Please* or any other words to your message. It will only cause errors. majordomo is a computer, not a person. No one reads your subscription request.)

**You send your news and views out to the list subscribers, like this:**

To: di@lists.uoregon.edu

Subject: *Whatever describes your topic.*

Message: *Whatever you want to say.*

The list is retro-moderated, which means that some messages may not be posted if they are inappropriate. For the most part inappropriate messages are ones that contain offensive language or are off-topic solicitations.

# *Summer 2003 Direct Instruction Training Opportunities*

The Association for Direct Instruction is pleased to announce the following intensive DI training conferences. These events will provide comprehensive training presented by some of the most skilled trainers in education. Plan now to attend one of these professional development conferences.

**Save these dates:**

**6th Southeast DI Conference and Institutes**

June 10–13, 2003
Adams's Mark, Florida Mall
Orlando, Florida

**8th Mountain States DI Conference**

July 7–9, 2003
Antlers Adam's Mark
Colorado Springs, Colorado

**29th National Direct Instruction Conference and Institutes**

July 20–24, 2003
Eugene Hilton and Conference Center
Eugene, Oregon

**8th Midwest Direct Instruction Conference and Institutes**

August 6–8, 2003
Holiday Inn Mart Plaza
Chicago, Illinois

# *Videotapes on the Direct Instruction Model*

ADI has an extensive collection of videos on Direct Instruction. These videos are categorized as informational, training, or motivational in nature. The informational tapes are either of historical interest or were produced to describe Direct Instruction. The training tapes have been designed to be either stand-alone training or used to supplement and reinforce live training. The motivational tapes are keynote presentations from past years of the National Direct Instruction Conference.

## Informational Tapes

***Where It All Started***—45 minutes. Zig teaching kindergarten children for the Engelmann-Bereiter pre-school in the 60s. These minority children demonstrate mathematical understanding far beyond normal developmental expectations. This acceleration came through expert teaching from the man who is now regarded as the "Father of Direct Instruction," Zig Engelmann. Price: $10.00 (includes copying costs only).

***Challenge of the 90s: Higher-Order thinking***—45 minutes, 1990. Overview and rationale for Direct Instruction strategies. Includes home-video footage and Follow Through. Price: $10.00 (includes copying costs only).

***Follow Through: A Bridge to the Future***—22 minutes, 1992. Direct Instruction Dissemination Center, Wesley Elementary School in Houston, Texas, demonstrates approach. Principal, Thaddeus Lott, and teachers are interviewed and classroom footage is shown. Created by Houston Independent School District in collaborative partnership with Project Follow Through. Price: $10.00 (includes copying costs only).

***Direct Instruction***—black and white, 1 hour, 1978. Overview and rationale for Direct Instruction compiled by Haddox for University of Oregon College of Education from footage of Project Follow Through and Eugene Classrooms. Price: $10.00 (includes copying costs only).

## Training Tapes

***The Elements of Effective Coaching***—3 hours, 1998. Content in *The Elements of Effective Coaching* was developed by Ed Schaefer and Molly Blakely. The video includes scenarios showing 27 common teaching problems, with demonstrations of coaching interventions for each problem. A common intervention format is utilized in all scenarios. Print material that details each teaching problem and the rationale for correcting the problem is provided. This product should be to used to supplement live DI coaching training and is ideal for Coaches, Teachers, Trainers. Price…$395.00 Member Price…$316.00

***DITV—Reading Mastery 1, 2, 3 and Fast-Cycle Preservice and Inservice Training***—The first tapes of the Level I and Level II series present intensive preservice training on basic Direct Instruction teaching techniques and classroom management strategies used in *Reading Mastery* and the equivalent lesson in *Fast-Cycle*. Rationale is explained. Critical techniques are presented and demonstrated. Participants are led through practical exercises. Classroom teaching demonstrations with students are shown. The remaining tapes are designed to be used during the school year as inservice training. The tapes are divided into segments, which present teaching techniques for a set of of upcoming lessons. Level III training is presented on one videotape with the same features as described above. Each level of video training includes a print manual.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Reading Mastery I* (10 Videotapes) | $150.00 |
| *Reading Mastery II* (5 Videotapes) | $75.00 |
| *Reading Mastery III* (1 Videotape) | $25.00 |
| Combined package *(Reading Mastery I–III)* | $229.00 |

***Corrective Reading: Decoding B1, B2, C***—(2-tape set) 4 hours, 38 minutes + practice time. Pilot video training tape that includes an overview of the *Corrective* series, placement procedures, training and practice on each part of a decoding lesson, information on classroom management/reinforcement, and demonstration of lessons (off-camera responses). Price $25.00.

## Conference Keynotes

These videos are keynotes from the National Direct Instruction Conference in Eugene. These videos are professional quality, two-camera productions suitable for use in meetings and trainings.

### 28th National Direct Instruction Conference Keynotes

***No Excuses in Portland Elementary, The Right Choice Isn't Always the Easiest, and Where Does the Buck Stop?*** 2 tapes, 1 hour, 30 minutes total. Ernest Smith is Principal of Portland Elementary in Portland, Arkansas. The February 2002 issue of *Reader's Digest* featured Portland Elementary in an article about schools that outperformed expectations. Smith gives huge credit to the implementation of DI as the key to his students and teacher's success. In his opening remarks, Zig Engelmann gives a summary of the Project Follow Through results and how these results translate into current educational practices. Also included are Zig's closing remarks. Price: $30.00

***Lesson Learned...the Story of City Springs, Reaching for Effective Teaching, and Which Path to Success?*** 2 Tapes, 2 hours total. In the fall of 2000 a documentary was aired on PBS showing the journey of City Springs Elementary in Baltimore from a place of hopelessness to a place of hope. The principal of City Springs, Bernice Whelchel addressed the 2001 National DI Conference with an update on her school and delivered a truly inspiring keynote. She describes the determination of her staff and students to reach the excellence she knew they were capable of. Through this hard work City Springs went from being one of the 20 lowest schools in the Baltimore City Schools system to one of the top 20 schools. This keynote also includes a 10-minute video updating viewers on the progress at City Springs in the 2000–2001 school year. In the second keynote Zig Engelmann elaborates on the features of successful implementations such as City Springs. Also included are Zig's closing remarks. Price: $30.00

***Commitment to Children—Commitment to Excellence and How Did We Get Here... Where are We Going?***—95 minutes. These keynotes bring two of the biggest names in Direct Instruction together. The first presentation is by Thaddeus Lott, Senior. Dr. Lott was principal at Wesley Elementary in Houston, Texas from 1974 until 1995. During that time he turned the school into one of the best in the nation, despite demographics that would predict failure. He is an inspiration to thousands across the country. The second presentation by Siegfried Engelmann continues on the theme that we know all we need to know about how to teach—we just need to get out there and do it. This tape also includes Engelmann's closing remarks. Price: $30.00.

**State of the Art & Science of Teaching and Higher Profile, Greater Risks**—50 minutes. This tape is the opening addresses from the 1999 National Direct Instruction Conference at Eugene. In the first talk Steve Kukic, former Director of Special Education for the state of Utah, reflects on the trend towards using research based educational methods and research validated materials. In the second presentation, ***Higher Profile, Greater Risks,*** Siegfried Engelmann reflects on the past of Direct Instruction and what has to be done to ensure successful implementation of DI. Price: $30.00

***Successful Schools... How We Do It***—35 minutes. Eric Mahmoud, Co-founder and CEO of Seed Academy/Harvest Preparatory School in Minneapolis, Minnesota presented the lead keynote for the 1998 National Direct Instruction Conference. His talk was rated as one of the best features of the conference. Eric focused on the challenges of educating our inner city youth and the high expectations we must communicate to our children and teachers if we are to succeed in raising student performance in our schools. Also included on this video is a welcome by Siegfried Engelmann, Senior Author and Developer of Direct Instruction Programs. Price: $15.00

***Fads, Fashions & Follies—Linking Research to Practice***—25 minutes. Dr. Kevin Feldman, Director of Reading and Early Intervention for the Sonoma County Office of Education in Santa Rosa, California presents on the need to apply research findings to educational practices. He supplies a definition of what research is and is not, with examples of each. His style is very entertaining and holds interest quite well. Price: $15.00

***Moving from Better to the Best***—20 minutes. Closing keynote from the National DI Conference. Classic Zig Engelmann doing one of the many things he does well… motivating teaching professionals to go out into the field and work with kids in a sensible and sensitive manner, paying attention to the details of instruction, making sure that excellence instead of "pretty good" is the standard we strive for and other topics that have been the constant theme of his work over the years. Price $15.00

***Aren't You Special***—25 minutes. Motivational talk by Linda Gibson, Principal at a school in Columbus, Ohio, successful with DI, in spite of minimal support. Keynote from 1997 National DI Conference. Price: $15.00

***Effective Teaching: It's in the Nature of the Task***—25 minutes. Bob Stevens, expert in cooperative learning from Penn State University, describes how the type of task to be taught impacts the instructional delivery method. Keynote from 1997 National DI Conference. Price: $15.00

*continued on next page*

# Videotapes on the Direct Instruction Model...continued

***One More Time***—20 minutes. Closing from 1997 National DI Conference. One of Engelmann's best motivational talks. Good for those already using DI, this is sure to make them know what they are doing is the right choice for teachers, students and our future. Price: $15.00

***Keynotes from 22nd National DI Conference***—2 hours. Ed Schaefer speaks on "DI–What It Is and Why It Works," an excellent introductory talk on the efficiency of DI and the sensibility of research based programs. Doug Carnine's talk "Get it Straight, Do it Right, and Keep it Straight" is a call for people to do what they already know works, and not to abandon sensible approaches in favor of "innovations" that are recycled fads. Siegfried Engelmann delivers the closing "Words vs. Deeds" in his usual inspirational manner, with a plea to teachers not to get worn down by the weight of a system that at times does not reward excellence as it should. Price: $25.00

***Keynotes from the 1995 Conference***—2 hours. Titles and speakers include: Anita Archer, Professor Emeritus, San Diego State University, speaking on "The Time Is Now" (An overview of key features of DI); Rob Horner, Professor, University of Oregon, speaking on "Effective Instruction for All Learners"; Zig Engelmann, Professor, University of Oregon, speaking on "Truth or Consequences." Price: $25.00

***Keynote Presentations from the 1994 20th Anniversary Conference***—2 hours. Titles and speakers include: Jean Osborn, Associate Director for the Center for the Study of Reading, University of Illinois, speaking on "Direct Instruction: Past, Present & Future"; Sara Tarver, Professor, University of Wisconsin, Madison, speaking on "I Have a Dream That Someday We Will Teach All Children"; Zig Engelmann, Professor, University of Oregon, speaking on "So Who Needs Standards?" Price: $25.00

***An Evening of Tribute to Siegfried Engelmann***—2.5 hours. On July 26, 1995, 400 of Zig Engelmann's friends, admirers, colleagues, and protégés assembled to pay tribute to the "Father of Direct Instruction." The Tribute tape features Carl Bereiter, Wes Becker, Barbara Bateman, Cookie Bruner, Doug Carnine, and Jean Osborn—the pioneers of Direct Instruction—and many other program authors, paying tribute to Zig. Price: $25.00

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**New from the Association for Direct Instruction**
**A tool for you...**

# Corrective Reading Sounds Practice Tape

CORRECTIVE READING
SOUNDS PRACTICE
ADI PO Box 10252 • Eugene, OR 97440
1-800-995-2464
© 2000 Association for Direct Instruction

Dear *Corrective Reading* User,

A critical element in presenting *Corrective Reading* lessons is how accurately and consistently you say the sounds. Of course, when teachers are trained on the programs they spend time practicing the sounds, but once they get back into the classrooms they sometimes have difficulty with some of the sounds, especially some of the stop sounds.

I have assisted ADI in developing an audio tape that helps you practice the sounds. This tape is short (12 minutes). The narrator says each sound the program introduces, gives an example, then gives you time to say the sound. The tape also provides rationale and relevant tips on how to pronounce the sounds effectively.

Thanks for your interest in continuing to improve your presentation skills.

Siegfried Engelmann
Direct Instruction Program Senior Author

## Order Form: Corrective Reading Sounds Tape

Use this chart to figure your shipping and handling charges.

| If your order is: | Postage & Handling is: |
|---|---|
| $0.00 to $5.00 | $3.00 |
| $5.01 to $10.00 | $3.75 |
| $10.01 to $15.00 | $4.50 |
| $15.01 to $20.99 | $5.50 |
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# ADI Association for Direct Instruction

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## What is ADI, the Association for Direct Instruction?

ADI is a nonprofit organization dedicated primarily to providing support for teachers and other educators who use Direct Instruction programs. That support includes conferences on how to use Direct Instruction programs, publication of *The Journal of Direct Instruction (JODI)*, *Direct Instruction News (DI News)*, and the sale of various products of interest to our members.

## Who Should Belong to ADI?

Most of our members use Direct Instruction programs, or have a strong interest in using those programs. Many people who do not use Direct Instruction programs have joined ADI due to their interest in receiving our semiannual publications, *The Journal of Direct Instruction* and *Direct Instruction News*. *JODI* is a peer-reviewed professional publication containing new and reprinted research related to effective instruction. *Direct Instruction News* focuses on success stories, news and reviews of new programs and materials and information on using DI more effectively.

## Membership Options

☐ $40.00 **Regular Membership** (includes one year subscription to ADI publications, a 20% discount on ADI sponsored events and on materials sold by ADI).

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Direct Instruction news

ADI Effective School Practices

SARA G. TARVER, Editor, University of Wisconsin, Madison

# A Formula for Success: A No-Excuses-For-Failure Attitude, Competent Curriculum Development, and Technical Proficiency

This issue of *DI News* is packed with stories of success when using DI. Amy Griffin's report of the 2003 ADI awards contains several stories, each of which provides valuable insights into the ingredients of the successes. Gary Hanneman, recipient of the Excellence in Education Award, refused to accept failure as an option for students in his special education classroom. The teachers and administrators at Evergreen Elementary in Spokane, Washington, and Abraham Lincoln Middle School in Gainesville, Florida—the two schools that received Excellent School Awards—showed strong commitment to DI and untiring efforts to deliver DI with integrity and help others to learn to deliver DI with integrity. Richard Russell, a fifth-grade teacher who received the Susie Wayne Scholarship, tells how the Direct Instruction Model (including the DI programs published by SRA/McGraw-Hill) provided the tools that helped his students achieve excellence.

Two additional success stories are reported for Eastside Charter School in Wilmington, Delaware, and Victory Charter School near Atlanta. According to a staff reporter for *The News Journal*, Eastside "has outdone every school in the state this year, maybe in the history of standardized testing in Delaware." In a report of Victory Charter School's academic gains in reading, Curtis Jasper highlights the importance of an administrator who assumes the important role of instructional leader.

Perhaps the most phenomenal DI success story is that of City Springs Elementary in Baltimore. For the past 5 years, we have been amazed by the academic gains at City Springs as a result of a DI implementation by NIFDI. The 6th-year (2003) test scores are even more amazing (see the article contributed by Kurt Engelmann in this issue). Percentile ranks of 99 in **BOTH Reading and Math** for first grade! I'd find this unbelievable if I were not fully aware of the power of DI. And the fifth-grade percentile ranks of 87 in reading and 79 in math ain't bad either. Once again, hats off to Bernice Whelchel, Principal, and the entire teaching staff at City Springs.

How are such phenomenal successes achieved? By magic? No. By wishful thinking? No. By technical proficiency and competent curriculum development says Martin Kozloff in his article in this issue. To communicate clearly the differences between competent curriculum development and incompetent curriculum development, he juxtaposes negative and positive examples of technically proficient curriculum development. Obviously, Martin knows that juxtaposing negative and positive examples helps students to grasp complex concepts, and he makes use of that knowledge to help us understand some of the complexities of curriculum development.

In his troubleshooting article in this issue, Don Crawford details eight things that teachers should check when their first-grade students are ready for *Reading Mastery III* yet seem to have trouble "comprehending." Knowing what to do, he says, is the

*continued on page 3*

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*Direct Instruction News*

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*The DI News* is published semiannually by the Association for Direct Instruction. The mission of the Association for Direct Instruction, as stated in the by-laws, is to promote the improvement of effective educational methods.

The Association for Direct Instruction was incorporated in 1981 in the state of Oregon for educational purposes. ADI is a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code and is a publicly supported organization as defined in Sections 170(b)(1)(A)(ii) and 509(a)(1). Donations are tax-deductible.

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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES: $25 U. S.; $30 (U. S. currency) Canada; $40 Europe; $60 airmail to Europe.

(ISSN 1540-0026).

Managing Editor: Amy Griffin

Publisher: The Association for Direct Instruction

http://www.adihome.org

Layout and Design:
Beneda Design, Eugene, OR

# *Contribute to DI News:*

*DI News* provides practitioners, ADI members, the DI community, and those new to DI, with stories of successful implementations of DI, reports of ADI awards, tips regarding the effective delivery of DI, articles focused on particular types of instruction, reprints of articles on timely topics, and position papers that address current issues. *The News'* focus is to provide newsworthy events that help us reach the goals of teaching children more effectively and efficiently and communicating that a powerful technology for teaching exists but is not being utilized in most American schools. Readers are invited to contribute personal accounts of success as well as relevant topics deemed useful to the DI community. General areas of submission follow:

**From the field:** Submit letters describing your thrills and frustrations, problems and successes, and so on. A number of experts are available who may be able to offer helpful solutions and recommendations to persons seeking advice.

**News:** Report news of interest to ADI's members.

**Success stories:** Send your stories about successful instruction. These can be short, anecdotal pieces.

**Perspectives:** Submit critiques and perspective essays about a theme of current interest, such as: school restructuring, the ungraded classroom, cooperative learning, site-based management, learning styles, heterogeneous grouping, Regular Ed Initiative and the law, and so on.

**Book notes:** Review a book of interest to members.

**New products:** Descriptions of new products that are available are welcome. Send the description with a sample of the product or a research report validating its effectiveness. Space will be given only to products that have been field-tested and empirically validated.

**Tips for teachers:** Practical, short products that a teacher can copy and use immediately. This might be advice for solving a specific but pervasive problem, a data-keeping form, a single format that would successfully teach something meaningful and impress teachers with the effectiveness and cleverness of Direct Instruction.

**Submission Format:** Send an electronic copy with a hard copy of the manuscript. Indicate the name of the word-processing program you use. Save drawings and figures in separate files. Include an address and email address for each author.

**Illustrations and Figures:** Please send drawings or figures in a camera-ready form, even though you may also include them in electronic form.

Completed manuscripts should be sent to:

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Acknowledgement of receipt of the manuscript will be sent by email. Articles are initially screened by the editors for placement in the correct ADI publication. If appropriate, the article will be sent out for review by peers in the field. These reviewers may recommend acceptance as is, revision without further review, revision with a subsequent review, or rejection. The author is usually notified about the status of the article within a 6- to 8-week period. If the article is published, the author will receive five complimentary copies of the issue in which his or her article appears.

*Formula for Success...*
*continued from page 1*

key to avoiding the age-old excuses that the children are "too young" or "not developmentally ready."

Zig Engelmann, in his response to a *Time* article of 7/28/03, dispels the myth that "dyslexia" is a valid excuse for reading failure. He explains clearly the flaws in interpretations of MRI brain research that attribute reading failure (or "dyslexia") to brain activity patterns that are "different." Bob Dixon, in his "View From Askance," expands on this issue to explain clearly that so-called "causes" of poor reading are irrelevant to the real solutions to such problems. I really wish that the scientists who are studying "dyslexia" would read this article and "get it."

As we DI die-hards know, the most likely cause of reading failure is "dysteachia" (sometimes called "dyspedagogia"). And, unfortunately, most of the teacher-training programs in our universities actually contribute to the rampant dysteachia that we are seeing in our schools. Tina Errthum, in this issue, describes vividly the disillusionment and disappointment that she experienced as a student in a teacher-training program at a university in the Midwest. She is taking steps to inform administrators of that university that her teacher-training program failed to teach her what and how to teach. Tina's article reminds us of something that we all know—our system of training teachers must be reformed if we are to achieve true educational reform.

Happy reading and a happy 2003–2004 school year! ADI

AMY GRIFFIN, Association for Direct Instruction

# 2003 Excellence in Education Awards

Each year the Association for Direct Instruction issues a call for nominations in the categories of Excellence in Education, The Wesley Becker Excellent School Award, The Wesley Becker Research Award, and the Wayne Carnine Student Improvement Award. Members of the Board of Directors of ADI select the recipients. During the National Direct Instruction Conference held each summer in Eugene, Oregon an awards dinner takes place during which the awards recipients are presented with their award and given an opportunity to comment on the factors which led to their success, as well as thank other contributors to their success.

ADI is proud to recognize the 2003 recipients for the efforts they have made in utilizing Direct Instruction to improve student learning and performance. Unfortunately, we did not receive any nominations this year for the Wayne Carnine Student Improvement award. Sadly, an opportunity was missed to recognize the achievement of a student—the nature of the award is to recognize a student for academic achievement and that recognition is so important to students, especially students who had grown accustomed to failure and then find that through an effective program and teaching, failure need not be their course, they can make gains, move to grade level, pass the standardized tests, and obtain the confidence that all students deserve. The awards nomination forms will be sent to our membership in February; please take the time to acknowledge the achievement of not only the students, but your peers who are not just following fads, but are utilizing effective tools to ensure that the classroom serves its purpose: teaching students not just how to read, but truly giving them a skill that should be considered standard procedure in school, but all too often is not.

## Excellence in Education

### Gary Hanneman, Teaching

*Gary Hanneman*

Gary Hanneman is a self-contained special education teacher at Backman Elementary in Salt Lake City, Utah. The Direct Instruction programs that Gary currently uses include *Corrective Reading Decoding, Reading Mastery, Connecting Math Concepts, Spelling Mastery, Corrective Spelling Through Morphographs, Reasoning and Writing, Expressive Writing,* and *Cursive Writing.* The repertoire of DI programs that he has utilized throughout his career is also quite extensive.

Gary teaches Grades 4 through 6. The principal at Backman, Fern Wilkerson, described Gary's students and their performance level as such, "Generally, the students that Gary receives are nonreaders. Due to hard work and his unwavering belief that all students can learn and learn well if the conditions are right, Gary has a very high success rate. He teaches nonreaders to read fluently. Gary creates those conditions of success: a warm, caring environment, a place where all students are treated with respect and dignity, and instructional skills second to none. At the core of Gary's instructional strategies is his strong commitment to Direct Instruction. He is a master of his trade, and student success is the proof of his abilities. In Gary's classroom, failure is not an option."

A colleague of Gary's, Shelley McMurrir., shared how she came to know Gary and Direct Instruction. "I met Gary 23 years ago when I graduated from college. He was the other resource teacher where I had been hired at Stansbury Elementary School in West Valley City, Utah. I knew nothing about Direct Instruction until I met Gary. I walked into his classroom and the students would be answering in unison after Gary said something. He snapped his fingers and was always saying 'get ready.' It was all pretty amazing and quite foreign to me. I thought he was crazy at first, the way he carried on that DI was the best and only way to teach. He was passionate about DI and eventually convinced me that it works."

Shelley continues with, "Students in Gary's classroom are highly engaged and have no time to misbehave. Academic growth is made by all students in all areas. It is not unusual for a student to make more than a year's growth in reading. Students make academic gains as well as social gains in his classroom…He believes all students can learn and has been an advocate for DI. He converted me to DI when I was a young teacher which I am very grateful for. We used to joke about 'dysteachia.' It wasn't the students' fault they weren't learning. It was because their teachers suffered from 'dysteachia.' They didn't teach effectively, but we did because we used Direct Instruction."

Included in the nomination packet for Gary was a copy of a Writing Assessment of one of Gary's former students, Joshua Hall. The title of the assessment is "Lifes Exeperiences." It is a three-page essay describing Joshua's academic career and experiences in school. At one point he describes the beginning of his academic trouble in elementary school.

"As the weeks went on there were several things we learned to do, painting, singing, reading and such. The only problem was that I was failing, all my class work. I was so behind that my parents were starting to worry.

"They called in specialists in speach and comperhention. The specialist said that I was born with Dobhal Dislexys, meaning that words and numders switch arround in my head with out me knowing it. This problem would hold me back for a long time.

"It got so bad that I was scared to speak to anybody at school. Mean teachers and frustated parents did not help the situation. I became socially isolated and my self-esteem dropped.

*Students in Gary's classroom are highly engaged and have no time to misbehave. Academic growth is made by all students in all areas. It is not unusual for a student to make more than a year's growth in reading.*

"Then in 1996 my famly moved to Salt Lake to be closer to work and famly. That would turn out to be the best move I've ever made.

"I attended Backman Elimentary and my life turned around thanks to Gery Hadamen. He and mis Bard were my help to sucess, alawys pushing me with love and care: they ran me throgh the basics and helped me socialize. I learned how to play baskitball, read, and undersand.

"After that, my life turned arround and in 1998 I recieved the Academic Routey award. Only one is given out in Utah every cary.

"Now I'm in West High and have a 3.1 GPA. I'll never know/and, I'll never forget those people how helped me to acheive this success.

In conclusion life is a challenge, and if you never give up and always seek help no calleneg is too big or too small to handlee."

Gary Hanneman exemplifies what is meant by the term Excellence in Education. Congratulations, Gary, and thank you for your contribution to student success and improvement.

## *Wesley Becker Excellent School Award*

This year two schools have been recognized as Excellent Schools. Each of the schools received a $500 cash award.

### Evergreen Elementary, Spokane, Washington

One hundred percent of students at Evergreen use Direct Instruction programs, and *Reading Mastery* has been utilized in Grades K–3 for 4 years. Evergreen currently uses *Spelling Mastery, Reading Mastery, Language for Learning, Connecting Math Concepts, Reasoning and Writing*, and *Corrective Reading Decoding and Comprehension*. Awards, Citations, and Recognition given to the school include: listed in Washington State's Top 100 Schools, two teachers awarded ADI Direct Instruction Teachers of the Year, one teacher awarded Washington State ASCD Statewide Recognition Award, and one teacher awarded Eastern Washington University/Q 6 Television Station Teacher of the Month.

In her rationale describing why Evergreen Elementary should be recognized as an Excellent School, Dr. Nancy Marchand-Martella from Eastern Washington University wrote, "Evergreen Elementary serves as the Direct Instruction hub for the inland Northwest. Three universities—Eastern Washington University, Gonzaga University, and Whitworth College—all place students at Evergreen when they want their students to experience the best in Direct Instruction. The teachers at Evergreen are tireless in their pursuit of excellence. They provide guest talks at local universities, teach college courses and supervise student teachers and practicum students, allow classroom observations at any time, and serve as a model-demonstration school for those interested in seeing what Direct Instruction is all about. Evergreen Elementary supports research endeavors and has received numerous accolades for its teachers and for how students perform."

In a success story shared by SRA, it was reported that, "Evergreen Elementary students consistently score above the state standard on the reading portion of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). In fact, after Grade 3 students experienced 1 year of *Reading Mastery*, 83% of them met/exceeded the WASL reading state standard as Grade 4 students in 1999. By 2002, the high percentage continued—82% of Grade 4 students met or exceeded the state standard. Of those Grade 4 students who studied *Reading Mastery* for 3 or more years, 90.2% of them met or exceeded the state standard."

Dr. Betty Fry Williams from Whitworth College contributed that, "Evergreen Elementary provides an outstanding model of effective teaching strategies through their use of Direct Instruction curricula. As an education faculty member at nearby Whitworth College, I am especially grateful for Evergreen's presence in our neighborhood and for their constant support and training of our teacher education and special education students in Direct Instruction methods. "I would especially salute Linda McGlocklin and Susan Hornor who initiated the use of Direct Instruction in their first-grade classrooms. Their success in teaching students at all achievement levels provided momentum for other grade levels to adopt the Direct Instruction curricula as well. Their principal, Becky Cooke, recognized the power of this approach and encouraged its use in general education, in special education, and in the school's reading tutorial program. I have heard many Evergreen parents credit Direct Instruction for the considerable academic growth their children made. The programs are enthusiastically endorsed by the community the school serves.

*Evergreen Elementary provides an outstanding model of effective teaching strategies through their use of Direct Instruction curricula.*

"In addition, numerous teacher preparation students intern in Evergreen's classrooms, work as tutors, or carry out interventions with children in special education. Future teachers develop skills and attitudes that respect the Direct Instruction approach as effective and valuable for children. The classroom teachers have also made presentations within our courses and even encouraged the organization of a local Direct Instruction chapter. All of this has helped to disseminate information about Direct Instruction in a number of other school districts in our area."

Dr. Randy Williams from Gonzaga University has been teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in Direct Instruction for over 20 years. He stated that, "Because of their adoption and extensive utilization of Direct Instruction curricula, coupled with highly trained teachers who can train and coach their colleagues, I view Evergreen Elementary School as the most effective elementary school in this region." Dr. Williams adds that, "The last 3 years show an outstanding increasing trend (58%, 66%, and 70%) in the percent of students meeting or exceeding the national average on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). This is truly remarkable since the ITBS has traditionally not been sensitive to a phonetic/decoding approach to teaching reading."

Evergreen Elementary is exceptional in that the school is not only raising the achievement levels of its own students, but is also introducing future teachers to the effectiveness of Direct Instruction. What a positive force not only for the current and future students at Evergreen, but for the many lives that will be affected in the future because teachers in practice are given the opportunity to experience an effective school first hand and carry that information to other schools in which they will work upon graduation.

## Abraham Lincoln Middle School, Gainesville, Florida

The following write-up was composed by Claudia McKnight, Senior Coach/Trainer from the Center for Applied Research in Education (C.A.R.E.), Eugene, Oregon.

Abraham Lincoln Middle School in Gainesville, Florida serves a high poverty neighborhood in their major program. Of the major-program students, approximately 90% are African American, and 85% receive free or reduced lunch. All of the major-program and special education students in Grades 6–8 are in Direct Instruction programs. For the past 3 years Lincoln Middle School has received "A" scores from the state of Florida for student performance. How was this achieved?

Lincoln's rating was a "C" during the 1998–1999 school year. At that time it was decided to bring in *Corrective Reading* using the Goals 2000 Middle School reading grant. It was one of the options offered to schools in Florida with high levels of low achievement. The only reason Lincoln was not rated lower than a "C" was due to its magnet program for academically talented students, the Lyceum. Then came the challenge of raising the academic performance of the major-program and special education students who also attended Lincoln.

Two teams consisting of a teacher and an administrator went to visit schools in neighboring counties that were using *Corrective Reading*. Based on their observations and discussions, *Corrective Reading* was implemented during the 1999–2000 school year. The following summer, based on our students' performance on the FCAT, Lincoln was rated an "A" school. That 1st year of implementation, Lincoln used both *Decoding* and *Comprehension*. They have continued to use those programs with great success.

During the 2000–2001 school year two math teachers piloted *Connecting Math Concepts*. In the spring of 2001, Dr. Bonnie Grossen from the University of Oregon and the Center for Applied Research in Education (C.A.R.E.) provided a grant to Lincoln that allowed the school to expand the Direct Instruction program into language arts, math, and social studies. In addition, the grant supported a full-time, on-site, Direct Instruction coach and additional training for the staff.

The 2001–2002 school year saw the expansion of DI into sixth- through eighth-grade math in both the major program and special education and the implementation in the eighth grade of the *Understanding U.S. History* text. In addition, *Comprehension C* was used for all sixth- and seventh-grade language arts classes.

With C.A.R.E.'s ongoing technical and financial support, this year (2002–2003) we are a full scale implementation. All the sixth- through eighth-grade language arts classes began the year with instruction in *Expressive Writing II*, then transitioned into *Reasoning and Writing*. Sixth graders are being instructed in level D, seventh graders in E, and eighth graders in F. We just received our FCAT writing scores; they are the highest in Alachua County! Of the 124 major-program students in the eighth grade who took the test, 97.6% passed. (The Lyceum students are not included in this total.) Of the 61 eighth-grade ESE students who took the test, 57% received a passing score or higher. Note that several of the special education classes had to begin with *Expressive Writing I* and then went on to *II*. They had not begun *Reasoning and Writing* before the FCAT writing test was given.

*We just received our FCAT writing scores; they are the highest in Alachua County! Of the 124 major-program students in the eighth grade who took the test, 97.6% passed.*

The struggling readers are double served—one class of *Decoding* and one of *Comprehension* daily. The plans for next year reflect this commitment to continue to move those students struggling in reading and/or math quickly to grade level by offering two periods in each subject per day. It has been and will continue to be the goal of the Lincoln staff to have all eighth graders on grade level in each academic area. They are getting close! That is the level of commitment at Lincoln, and look at the payoff in student performance.

Here are some highlights from the 2002 FCAT results:

- 63% of the lowest quartile made above normal gains in FCAT reading,
- 67% of all students made above normal gains in FCAT reading, and
- 96% of all students passed the FCAT writing assessment.

Of the staff, 35% of the regular program teachers teach one or more DI classes; 90% of the ESE teachers are teaching one or more DI classes. The total staff teaching one or more DI class is 41%.

With Dr. Grossen's guidance, progress monitoring and in-class coaching were put in place. The daily progress monitoring and monthly summaries are invaluable when assuring that each student is progressing. The first major impact of the progress monitoring was showing the staff how often instruction was interrupted. Immediately a new field trip policy was put in place, and a shortened day did not mean a noninstruction day. Now every decision is weighed by asking how it will impact instruction.

The key issues of attendance and behavior have been taken up by the student support committee which meets weekly. These are noninstructional support staff: administrators, counselors, deans, and the nurse. They receive a report monthly on the DI students' progress and any students there are concerns about. The group then explores ways to aid the student. As a school they have dealt with the two main reasons students are not at mastery—attendance and discipline. The discipline referrals to the Dean's office are infrequent during the DI classes. However, the students who receive in-school suspensions for behavior during another class are excluded from their DI classes that day also. The faculty and support teams are working on a policy of allowing the student to attend her/his DI classes and then return to detention.

The on-site coordinator ensures that the students are placed properly, provides in-class coaching, has a position on the student support committee, and chairs the monthly DI teachers meeting. All incoming students, from 18 feeder schools, are tested in reading and math each spring so there is enough lead time for scheduling and ordering materials. New enrollees are given placement tests in both reading and math prior to any scheduling of their classes. They are placed with a "Bulldog Buddy" for the day and receive their schedule at the end of the day. Their student buddy ensures the new student will be familiar with the physical layout of Lincoln and the rules and procedures of the school. The delay of 1 day offers the DI site coordinator and the counselor to both correctly place the student in reading and math, and to also make sure no classes become too large, especially the ones at the lowest levels.

C.A.R.E. has sponsored a series of Open Houses at Lincoln over the past year and a half. The purpose of these gatherings is twofold. First, to provide general research-based knowledge regarding the things that work to raise scores for low performers, including students with disabilities. Secondly, to see first hand, through classroom visitations, what children from low-income neighborhoods are capable of, even if they start middle school well below the norm. We have had hundreds of visitors from North Carolina, Georgia, and throughout Florida. The following is a sample of comments from visitor evaluations:

"The classrooms were amazing. All the students were engaged and seemed pleased to show us what they could do. The teachers kept the pace and did a wonderful job."

"I was impressed to see so many students working hard and being successful."

"Everyone was excellent!"

C.A.R.E. has collaborated with Lincoln in conducting DI trainings. Using Dr. Grossen's training model, which intersperses training sessions with classroom practicums, the Lincoln students have both welcomed and shown unlimited patience with trainees as they try out their very newly acquired skills teaching that day's lesson.

*The Lincoln Middle School staff must be commended for accepting their students at their instructional level and then working with a curriculum that rapidly moves them toward the state standards.*

The Lincoln Middle School staff must be commended for accepting their students at their instructional level and then working with a curriculum that rapidly moves them toward the state standards. They have taken on the challenge with patience, eagerness, and heart. Staff morale at Lincoln is at an all time high! The staff collaboration, regardless of position, is a tribute to Lincoln's focus on the students; they truly are "all our kids."

## Wesley Becker Research Award

ADI is proud to promote and publish research articles about Direct Instruction, adding to the existing body of research literature. Two awards were given this year for the research award. Each of the lead authors received a $500 cash award. Each of the articles will appear in Volume 4, Number 1 of the *Journal of Direct Instruction* to be published in January of 2004. The cowinners are lead authors Michelle A. McKenzie and Angela M. Przychodzin-Havis both of Eastern Washington University.

*Angela M. Przychodzin-Havis*

The coauthors with Michelle A. McKenzie were Nancy E. Marchand-Martella, Marion E. Tso, and Ronald C. Martella, all from Eastern Washington University. The title of the article is, "Teaching Basic Math Skills to Preschoolers Using *Connecting Math Concepts Level K*." The article investigates the effects of teaching basic math skills to 16 children in an integrated university preschool using *Connecting Math Concepts Level K*.

The coauthors with Angela M. Przychodzin-Havis were Nancy E. Marchand-Martella, Ronald C. Martella, and Diane Azim, from Eastern Washington University. The title of the article is, "Direct Instruction Mathematics Programs: An Overview and Research Summary." The study provides an overview and research summary of Direct Instruction mathematics programs, specifically *DISTAR Arithmetic I and II*, *Corrective Mathematics*, and *Connecting Math Concepts*.

ADI thanks the people who nominated this year's awards recipients, and we congratulate the winners. Again, we would like to encourage you to continue to support the awards program by nominating and recognizing the schools, teachers, administrators, students, and others who are realizing effective educational practices through the use of Direct Instruction. ADI

**RICHARD RUSSELL, Center Academy, Flint, Michigan**

# *How to Achieve Excellence?*

## *The Susie Wayne Scholarship*

Our national reform goal is to achieve superlative standards. The initial word that best describes the impact Direct Instruction has on an effective education is excellence. What word? Excellence! According to the Association for Direct Instruction (ADI), Siegfried Engelmann developed a theory of instruction, the Direct Instruction model, at the University of Illinois in 1968. Susie Wayne demonstrated a certain passion for Direct Instruction as a teacher in Seattle, Washington, and ADI celebrates her life with the Susie Wayne Scholarship. As described by ADI, the main goal of the Direct Instruction model is to improve academic performance considerably over current performance levels. Because the goal of Direct Instruction is to move students to mastery as swiftly as possible, a portion of tutorial time is spent on rapid paced teacher-directed instruction, interjected by unmitigated rhythmic responses and individual student responses. Therefore, academic excellence can be achieved by using a Direct Instruction model.

As maintained by ADI, the Direct Instruction model integrated professional development and organizational components intended to make best use of reading, language arts, and mathematics programs. Through significant training and in-class coaching, teachers learn to identify tasks clearly, teach concepts and skills, work toward more complex concepts, impart extremely interactive lessons to large and small groups, obtain frequent oral responses, guarantee teacher praise for responses at a high rate, monitor and correct errors immediately, and periodically review skills and concepts. Mastery tests, given every few lessons, help teachers directly track student performance. Students are placed in appropriate instructional groups based on performance. Grouping may take place across the curriculum vertically and horizontally. Students who progress faster or slower than expected are regrouped accordingly. Those with special needs are included in regular classrooms except in the most extreme cases. B. F. Skinner's influence is exceptionally apparent in methods that can be classified under direct instruction or explicit teaching. One of the most acknowledged principles to be applied in the remedial treatment of children with learning disabilities is direct instruction. Haring and Bateman (1977) make the argument that children with learning disabilities do not learn by osmosis, as other children seem to. Rather, they need direct, intensive, and systematic input from, and interaction with, the teacher.

*Richard Russell*

**The Susie Wayne Scholarship**

Susie Wayne was a friend to many in the Direct Instruction community, and to many students in the greater Seattle area. She was an outstanding researcher, supervisor, and teacher. Her tireless spirit and great sense of humor were all the more remarkable because of critically serious medical problems that resulted in her death in 1996. In memory of her dedication to effective education for all students, the Association for Direct Instruction's Board of Directors established the Susie Wayne Scholarship. The annual award of $500 cash goes to a graduate-level student majoring in education.

The basis for the award is an essay competition. Qualified candidates must write a 1,000 word essay titled, "How to Achieve Excellence," and it must be related to Direct Instruction. The winner for 2003 is Richard Russell of Flint, Michigan, who is a student at Marygrove College in Detroit.

Academic excellence can be defined by reading, writing, and arithmetic. Although these are fundamental to an excellent education, as a fifth-grade teacher, the task to achieve academic excellence is arduous. It requires the student to work harder than they ever thought they could and to achieve more than they ever thought they would. It sets objectives and high standards of achievement and measures each individual's work against those standards. It does not show partiality, but requires the same assignments of everyone allowing each student's effort and ability to determine his/her individual status.

As a fifth-grade teacher, the Direct Instruction model has proven to be a credible instructional tool, and it has accelerated the learning of the at-risk students in my classroom. At present, Center Academy, Flint, Michigan, has implemented Direct Instruction as a supplement to standard instruction. By using the SRA/McGraw-Hill *Decoding Strategies* series, the curriculum materials and instructional sequences have stimulated most of my students that operated below grade level to grade-level mastery in a short period of time. From my readings, Direct Instruction programs are generally successful with low-income and at-risk children. The Direct Instruction model integrates teacher development through extensive training and in-class coaching. Joyce Chivari, DI Consultant, Chicago, IL, observes my classroom once a month. Mrs. Chivari monitors the classroom and is available to assist with any problems, and she occasionally takes over a part of the lesson to model pedagogical procedures.

A certain procedure for the Direct Instruction model is situated on internal program quality of student performance such as the number of lessons completed and mastery of materials learned. Also, *Decoding Strategies* prepare students for standardized tests and other measures of accountability. Besides, ADI provides materials that prepare students to take major standardized tests. As well, SRA/McGraw-Hill has aligned the curriculum between the Direct Instruction programs and the State of Michigan Standards and Benchmarks.

Furthermore, academic excellence teaches children to be responsible. Through graded daily homework assignments and dated research assignments, students learn that they are accountable for completing the work assigned to them. They develop study habits and learn to prioritize and manage their time to ensure the completion of assigned tasks. They learn to be dependable and responsible individuals that can achieve academic excellence as a result of the Direct Instruction model. *ADI*

## References

Haring, N. G., & Bateman, B. D. (1977). *Teaching the learning disabled child.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

CURTIS D. JASPER, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Victory Charter School

# *An Administrator Who Really Is an Instructional Leader*

In less than 3 short years, Victory Charter School has endured the growing pains of start-up, relocation to a new building, and changes in leadership to develop an effective coaching model for Direct Instruction. With a student population of close to 450 students and half of those qualifying for free and reduced meals, inner-city Fulton County, Georgia's first charter school has made significant academic gains with Direct Instruction in reading.

On last year's statewide assessment (Criterion Reference Competency Test), the school showed a gain of 17% in the percentage of fourth graders that reached the *meets the standard* or *exceeded the standard* proficiency levels in reading. At sixth grade, these proficiency levels were met by 81% of the students. Our goal for sixth graders this year (2003–2004) is 90%. For the 2nd year in a row, 100% of kindergartners scored at a level of achievement that requires no assistance moving into first grade on the Georgia Kindergarten Assessment Program Test. Eighty-four percent of all teachers agree that the educational program offered to our students at Victory Charter School is of high quality, as rated by the National Study of School Evaluation.

How has Victory Charter School achieved these results? They chose a Direct Instruction curriculum and adopted a model of leadership that effectively monitors and enhances the curriculum. Curtis D. Jasper, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, has worked as head administrator and instructional leader of Victory Charter School since the middle of the school's 1st year. He designed and implemented an organizational structure that utilizes what he refers to as the *5 Classic Treasures*: Expect, Value, Monitor, Train, and Celebrate. The Victory Charter School academic leadership team consists of a dean of students, two instructional coordinators, and five lead teachers. Together, they implement Jasper's classic treasures.

## Expect

Expectations must be presented frequently, and must be unchanged, in order to lead the institution to high standards and student achievement. The school administrator must assume the role of instructional leader and be responsible for communicating the high expectations. Teacher, student, colleague, and parent expectations will rise or fall based on the administrator's ability to communicate the school's expectations clearly.

The head administrator's number one priority must be the instructional program. Everyone is expected to adhere to the chosen DI curriculum. All teachers are expected to teach to mastery at least a lesson per day. Students are expected to achieve a high level of mastery and demonstrate their achievement on any and all standardized assessments. Parents are expected to deliver their children on time every day. Instructional coordinators and the dean of students are expected to observe, coach, mentor, and support at least 10–15 teachers every single week. Lead teachers are expected to hold peer coaching sessions every week during their after school planning times. The head administrator is expected to support the entire curriculum and instructional program at all costs.

> ***All teachers are expected to teach to mastery at least a lesson per day. Students are expected to achieve a high level of mastery and demonstrate their achievement on any and all standardized assessments.***

## Value

The instructional leader must demonstrate values-driven behavior. Students, teachers, and parents will not value the school's reading program if the instructional leader does not. He or she must model appropriate values, lead teachers and parents to those values, and test himself and teachers to ensure that they are living up to those values.

The instructional leader's values must be uncompromisable, undebatable truths that drive and direct the behavior of all teachers and all students. The values must be motivational—they must provide reasons for what we do. The values must also be restrictive—they must place boundaries around behavior. Administrators must become the kinds of leaders that people will follow voluntarily, even if they had no title or position.

## Monitor

At Victory Charter School, our director of curriculum and instruction and our two instructional coordinators monitor the instructional program on a daily basis. All three team members are in and out of all classrooms every single day. We are challenging our teachers to maximize the time on task by adhering to strict schedules across all grade levels. All voices at Victory Charter School come on at 8:15 a.m. Sharp! No announcements, assemblies, visitors, or parents are allowed to interrupt the reading block from 8:15–9:30. The instructional coordinators are charged with supporting and monitoring the curriculum by observing and coaching teachers, collecting lesson plans and lesson gain charts, and analyzing the results of all mastery tests, checkouts, and pacing charts. A dean of students is charged with supporting all programs by working with teachers on behavior management.

Our two instructional coordinators were chosen because they were considered by all stakeholders to be the absolute best Direct Instruction teachers. Because of their expertise and success at producing high student achievement 2 consecutive years while they were in the classroom, they were appointed as in-house coaches who could "bring out the best" in their colleagues.

The director provides training for the instructional coordinators and the dean of students and gives them the autonomy to coach without interference. The director also monitors their performance by shadowing them during classroom observations and requiring monthly reports and copies of all observation forms. At Victory Charter School, the instructional coordinators and the dean of students form a "winning team" that is motivated to meet high expectations long before the instructional leader comes around to do his monthly observations. By the time Mr. Jasper comes around to conduct his formal observations, it is "show-off time."

Many of our new teachers, although they had taught at other schools, were not accustomed to our coaching model that requires unannounced classroom observations by others. However, the model requires that administrators monitor the teachers' performance in the same way the teachers monitor their students' performance. All teachers are now accustomed to this model and our staff functions like one big DI classroom!

### Train

No train, no gain! Victory Charter School has a highly trained staff, due largely to the coaching model and Mr. Curtis Jasper's expertise and experience with schoolwide implementations of DI programs. Mr. Jasper is a former DI consultant and trainer. He came to Victory Charter School after he and his wife moved from Chicago to Atlanta in the winter of 2000. Prior to moving, Mr. Jasper had worked as a consultant with over 25 schools around the country. He is a former DI teacher and now a school administrator. He has been committed to DI since 1994. Mr. Jasper is committed to training his teachers at every opportunity. Staff/faculty meetings are not social gatherings. Nor or they devoted to lectures. They are occasions for training one another in all of our DI programs, discussing challenges, and celebrating teacher success and student achievement.

The school's budget is prioritized to accommodate professional development and the purchase of curriculum materials. We understand the benefits of supplementing our own training by sending teachers out of the building to be trained by other experts in other areas. All teachers are required to perform a professional development training in front of their peers and to go out of the building to be trained at least once. All new teacher candidates are asked to demonstrate a task from one of the DI programs during their final interview.

### Celebrate

Student achievement is celebrated within Victory Charter School throughout the entire school year. Any classrooms or groups that pass a mastery test or checkout or any other assessment with at least 90% mastery are recognized during the morning announcements. In addition, student achievement is recognized and celebrated within a number of reading incentive programs that support our DI mainframe.

Although Victory Charter School has achieved significant success in a short period of time, we have a long way to go. Currently, the school goes up to the seventh grade, but the plans are to add a grade each year until 12th grade. ADI

*Curtis Jasper has worked as an independent consultant since 1998. He has extensive training experience with many DI programs as well as schoolwide DI implementations. His most profound area of expertise is working with school administrators and other instructional school leaders with curriculum and instruction. If you have any questions or are interested in working with Mr. Jasper please contact him at 770-856-6906 or email at cjasper@acninc.net*

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KURT ENGELMANN, National Institute for Direct Instruction (NIFDI)

# *City Springs Sets the Standard...Again*

Take a school in a high-poverty area of a large U.S. city—a school that has experienced years of utter failure—and implement the full-immersion model of Direct Instruction faithfully for more than 6 years, and what are the results? Possibly the most dramatic turn-around of a school from failure to success in the history of the United States.

### From the Bottom to the Top

Until Baltimore's City Springs Elementary started implementing the full-immersion model of Direct Instruction in 1996, the school was considered to be the epitome of failure. Ninety-five percent of the students were (and still are) eligible for free or reduced lunch. Academic performance was at subbasement levels. City Springs was one of the very lowest performing schools in the city of Baltimore out of nearly 120 schools. At one point, no students in the school's third or fifth grades passed the Maryland State test, the MSPAP, in either mathematics or writing. School climate was just as poor as academic performance. Students ran the halls, and teachers locked classroom doors in order to control their students...and keep others out.[1]

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[1] Principal Bernice Whelchel described the chaotic nature of the school before implementation of Direct Instruction in her keynote address at the 27th annual National Direct Instruction Conference in Eugene in 2001 (available on video from ADI), and the 2000 PBS documentary, "The Battle of City Springs," captured the difficulty of transforming the school during the 2nd year of DI implementation, 1997–1998.

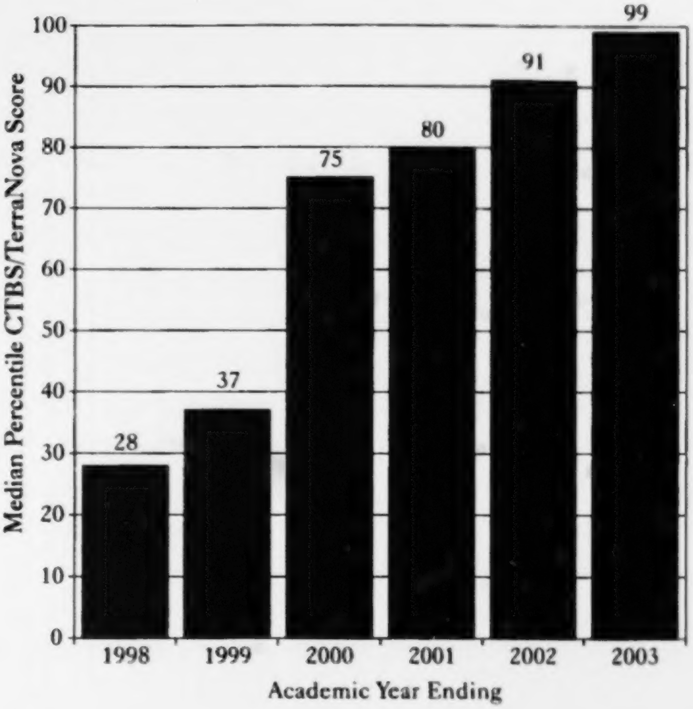
Fast forward to 2003 and the school is the epitome of excellence. The halls are clean and orderly. Students are well behaved. Most important, student performance has "shot through the roof!" The school scored highest in the city in first-grade reading, first-grade math, and fifth-grade reading on the 2003 TerraNova test. The median score for first-grade reading and first-grade math was at the 99th percentile—the highest possible score. Fifth-grade scores were also very impressive—the 87th percentile in reading and the 79th percentile in math—up from the 14th and 9th percentiles, respectively, in 1998.

Many of the dozen or so other high-poverty schools in Baltimore implementing Direct Instruction have also experienced strong achievement gains, though not as large as those of City Springs. Four of the top five first-grade reading scores in Baltimore in 2003 were from DI schools. These schools' scores ranged from the 92nd percentile (Roland Park) to the 99th percentile (Langston Hughes). Three of the top first-grade math scores were also from DI schools (Roland Park—the 94th percentile, and Langston Hughes—the 93rd percentile, in addition to City Springs). But, with the exception of Roland Park, which is from a higher income area, City Springs outperformed the other DI schools in the upper grades by a considerable margin. For example, the median fifth-grade math score for Roland Park matched the score for City Springs (the 79th percentile), while the next highest score by a DI school was at the 62nd percentile (Langston Hughes), which is still very respectable.

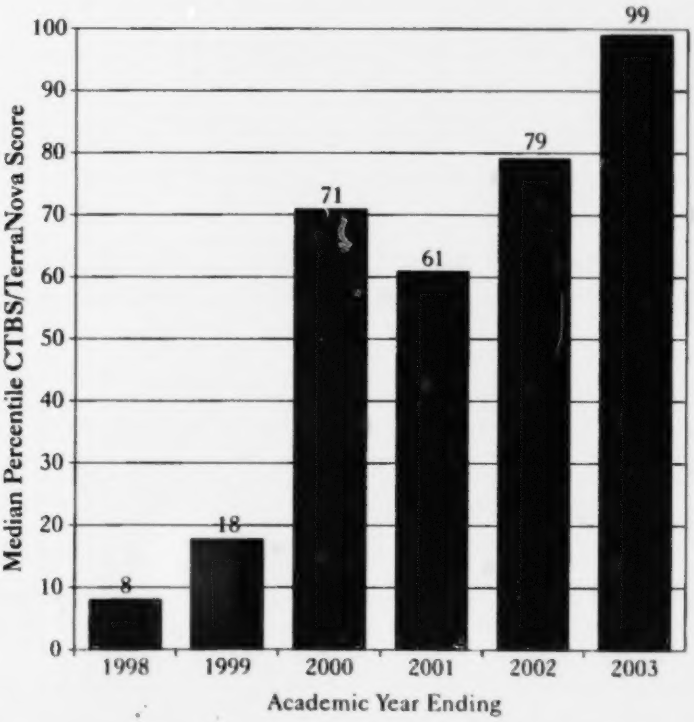
## Why City Springs Is the Leader

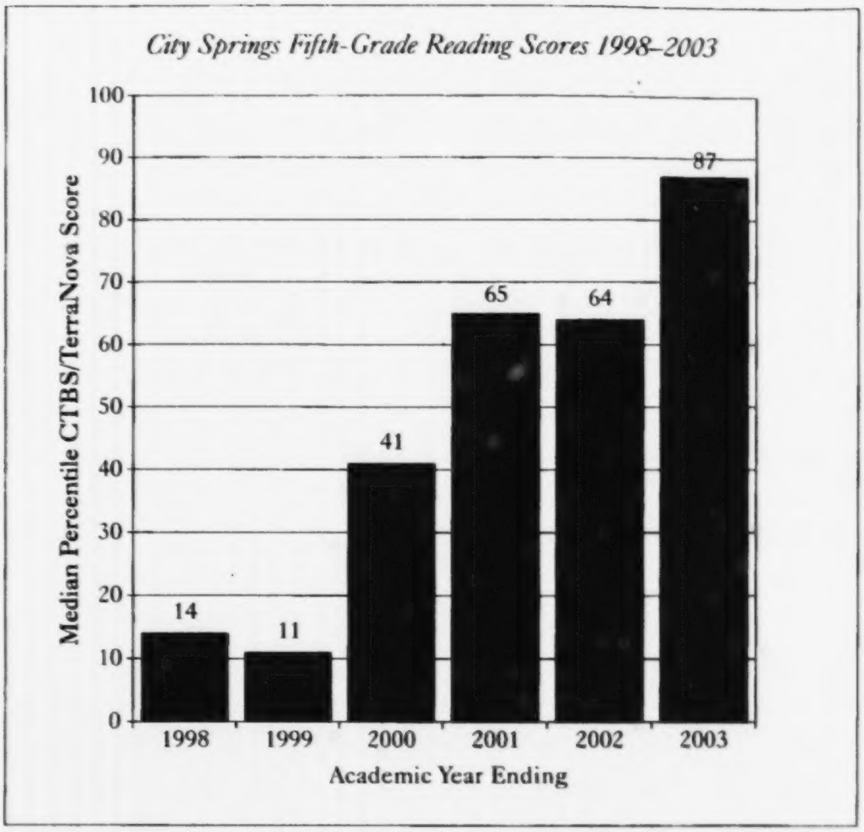
What accounts for City Springs' unparalleled upsurge in student performance? Simply put, City Springs is the first low-income urban school in the U.S. to fully implement the Direct Instruction full-immersion model long enough to realize its full effects in the upper

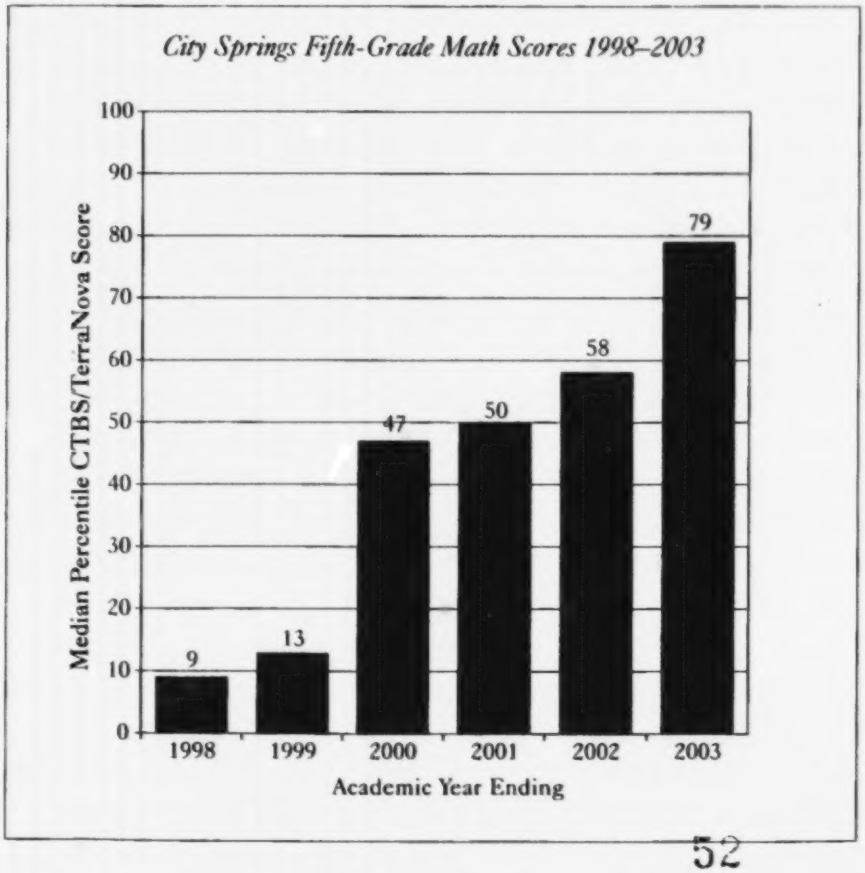
*City Springs First-Grade Reading Scores 1998–2003*



*City Springs First-Grade Math Scores 1998–2003*







grades. City Springs has consistently followed the Developer's Guidelines, a comprehensive set of implementation parameters outlined by DI creator and founder of the National Institute for Direct Instruction (NIFDI), Siegfried "Zig" Engelmann.[2]

Dr. Muriel Berkeley, President of the Baltimore Curriculum Project, noted in her 2002 article in *The Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk* (*JESPAR*) that City Springs implemented the full model with more fidelity than other Baltimore schools.[3]

The full-immersion model includes the following components

- Adequate time to accelerate children's performance. Morning and afternoon reading periods are scheduled and implemented for all students in kindergarten, first, and second grades, and extra reading instruction is provided to students who are behind in Grades 3 and above.
- The full DI curriculum—the reading, language, writing, spelling, and math programs. No competing programs are allowed that teach a different strategy that might confuse children.
- Teaching to mastery. Staff members strive to bring all students to mastery on all tasks in every lesson.
- Appropriate placement. Students are placed appropriately in the instructional sequence at the start of the year. Groups are re-grouped and re-placed formally at least three times a year and informally throughout the year based on student performance.

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[2] The Developer's Guidelines are available via the *Data and Issues* section of the NIFDI web page, www.nifdi.org.

[3] Her article also appeared in the Fall 2002 issue of the *DI News*.

- Classroom support. In addition to in-class coaching from the external support provider (NIFDI), teachers receive support from school-based peer coaches who go through a three-level advanced training series.
- Frequent assessment. Teachers record lesson progress and mastery test data, which the external support provider and the school's management team (the principal, assistant principal, building coordinator, and peer coaches) analyze weekly.
- Problem solving. The school management team participates in weekly problem-solving sessions with the external support provider to review progress and problems and determine the tasks for the coming week.

A crucial component of the model is to have a principal who is an effective instructional leader, and Principal Bernice Whelchel of City Springs fulfills this role to a T. Principal Whelchel consistently attends teacher and coaches trainings. She knows the DI programs very well, and she frequently takes over instructional groups in order to assess student mastery and enable teachers to visit other classrooms. She is in classrooms much of the day observing students and teachers. She sets down clear expectations for students and teachers, and she follows up to make sure that her expectations are met. When students work hard and achieve Principal Whelchel let's them know they've done a good job. She is the leader in celebrating student success.

The full-immersion model places great emphasis on accelerating students through the primary levels of reading and math in kindergarten and first grade. At City Springs, nearly all children who enter the school in kindergarten complete *Reading Mastery II* during first grade, and a significant proportion of first graders move well into *Reading Mastery III* by the end of the year. Kindergarten and first-grade students also complete the first levels of the language track (*Language for Learning* and *Reasoning & Writing*). This acceleration continues through the middle grades so that about half of the children who entered in kindergarten complete level VI of *Reading Mastery* by the end of fourth grade.

The strong DI implementation in the primary grades at City Springs has made it possible for the school to implement the upper levels of the DI programs in fourth and fifth grades.

> *DI is highly effective at the upper elementary grade levels, which dispels the myth that DI is only effective with lower-grade learners.*

These upper-level programs teach sophisticated reasoning, writing, comprehension, and vocabulary. Most children in City Springs are placed in a Direct Instruction U.S. History textbook in fifth grade.[4]

In this program, students learn a great deal of sophisticated vocabulary (e.g., words such as "accommodate," "capacity," "resources," "dominate," "economic"), learn a great deal of important general knowledge on social studies and geography, and do a wide variety of writing tasks (e.g., comparing the War of 1812 and the Revolutionary War).

## Implications of the City Springs Experience

The extraordinarily high student performance at City Springs has several implications for transforming failed schools. The school's experience implies that

1. DI is highly effective at the upper elementary grade levels, which dispels the myth that DI is only effective with lower-grade learners. Much of the research on DI from Project Follow Through, a K–3rd-grade project, and other sources focuses on the effects of DI on primary-grade children or remedial learners. The preponderance of research in these areas has led many to conclude that DI is *only* effective with younger populations "developmentally," or older students "remedially," but not with older students "developmentally." The high performance of City Springs' upper-grade students dispels these myths.
2. The "fourth-grade slump," which asserts that at-risk students inevitably fall behind their more privileged peers in the upper elementary grades, is also a myth. Highly at-risk students can continue to excel and outperform their more privileged peers in the upper elementary grades if the full-immersion DI model is applied rigorously for 5 years or more. The performance of at-risk students does not need to "slump" dramatically in the upper grades.
3. All of the components of the full-immersion model are necessary for maximizing student achievement. City Springs has implemented the full-immersion model with the most fidelity and has achieved the greatest gains. The degree to which other schools in Baltimore have been able to accelerate student performance reflects the degree to which they have followed the Developer's Guidelines. This relationship between fidelity of implementation and performance holds true for the other schools NIFDI has worked

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[4] *Understanding U.S. History* by Douglas Carnine, et al., is available via the University of Oregon Bookstore, 800.352.1733.

with across the United States. So to maximize student performance, schools need to receive **comprehensive support**—including substantial on-site coaching, off-site data analysis, and frequent problem-solving sessions—and the school staff needs to fulfill **specific roles**—including a principal who is the instructional leader of the school.[5]

## Will Policy-Makers Use City Springs as a Model?

If policy-makers at the district and state levels are serious about improving student performance, they should examine the experience of City Springs and determine how to replicate the school's experience at other schools. Ironically, City Springs serves more as a national model than as a local model. Principal Whelchel and City Springs have received accolades at the federal level, including recognition by the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and the Workforce, U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige, and President and Mrs. Bush at the anniversary of the signing of the No Child Left Behind Act.[6]

Baltimore officials, on the other hand, have largely ignored the success of City Springs and other Baltimore DI schools. Mike Bowler describes this lack of attention in his column in *The Baltimore Sun* ("An Urban Oasis Of Flowing Hope," June 15, 2003):

> It's getting to be a broken record, but City Springs Elementary, one of Baltimore's poorest, led the city again in this year's TerraNova testing, results of which were announced last week. The east-side school's scores have been surging for 5 straight years in both math and reading, surely proving that Direct Instruction, the scripted curriculum used at the school, is a success. Four of the top five city schools in first-grade scoring use Direct Instruction. Yet the curriculum is seldom credited by the school system's leaders. One wonders why.

City Springs should indeed serve as a local AND national model of how to achieve academic success with at-risk students, and the school could serve as a training center for other schools implementing Direct Instruction. To ignore the experience of City Springs, to dismiss its success as an anomaly, or to attribute its success to a single factor (e.g., the relatively small size of the school) is to obscure information needed by others who are trying earnestly to learn how to improve the academic performance of at-risk students and thereby improve the lives of children greatly.

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[5] A session that is part of the annual National Direct Instruction conference in Eugene, *A Full-Immersion Model for Implementing DI*, describes the components needed to maximize student performance.

[6] The school also received the Excellent School Award from the Association for Direct Instruction in 2001.

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MARTIN A. KOZLOFF, University of North Carolina, Wilmington

# Martin's Musings

## *Technical Proficiency, Direct Instruction, and Educational Excellence*

How many excellent teachers, courses, or lessons have you had in your life? Or—beside yourself—how many excellent teachers have your students had in their lives? I mean, how often could you describe instruction as follows?

1. Students were carried along by the teacher's brisk presentations and by class discussions. Students wanted to grasp (get) everything the teacher was trying to teach. They were so engaged they had little urge to pester their neighbors or look out the window.
2. The subject matter (things to learn) was presented in a **logical sequence**. The teacher taught the **tools** needed (e.g., vocabulary words, basic strategies) **on time, before** students needed them. What students learned every lesson was built on and used in the next lessons.
3. The teacher's demonstrations (**models**), explanations, and examples were clear and on target (focused on the objective at hand) so that students grasped new material (e.g., a definition, or how to conjugate a new verb) quickly and without a lot of struggle, confusion, and errors. Even when material was hard, students made steady progress.
4. Not only did students get new material, they were able to apply it skillfully (accurately and quickly)

to new tasks and examples, and they retained skill despite the passage of time.

No doubt you and your students have had **very few** teachers, courses, or lessons as described above. It doesn't have to be that way. But what makes the difference between ordinary instruction (boring, plodding, confusing, not much is learned and still less is retained) and the rare instruction (common to Direct Instruction) described above?

## *It's All About Technical Proficiency*

Many golfers club the ground more often than the ball. Few are experts, who regularly hit the ball a mile down the fairway. What's the difference that makes the difference in **outcome**? **Not motivation**—good AND poor golfers want to do well. **Not intelligence**—good and poor golfers are equally bright. **Not effort**—duffers try just as hard to hit the ball well. ***The difference that makes the difference in outcome is...technical proficiency, or know-how.***

Some nurses take three or four tries to get the needle in your vein. Other nurses effortlessly hit the vein the first time. What's the difference that makes the difference in **outcome? Technical proficiency**.

The same applies to cooking, dancing, carpentry, archery, poetry, and any other activity you can think of. The difference that **makes** the difference in **outcomes** *(performances)* that are (a) clumsy, inadequate, and full of errors, versus (b) smooth and effective is...**technical proficiency**.

Technical proficiency in education is required on at least two levels: (a) schoolwide or districtwide curriculum development (e.g., pre-K–6 reading, math, and science), and (b) instructional design. The principles and methods of Direct Instruction make significant contributions to technical proficiency at both levels. Let's look at each one in turn.

## *Schoolwide or Districtwide Curriculum Development*

Following are negative and positive examples of technically proficient curriculum development. Unfortunately, the negative example (under the aegis of progressive, child-centered, constructivist education) has been dominant for a long time.

## *A Model of Incompetent Curriculum Development*

I. Planners (e.g., school or district administrators) begin with vague but emotionally appealing phrases as guiding principles—phrases such as developmentally appropriate practices, best practices, the whole child, multiple intelligences, learning styles, learning community, diversity, students construct knowledge. Their presumption is that curricula inspired by these phrases (whose lack of sense is unnoticed) will be effective. In other words, value orientations and magical incantations are more important than design principles based on experimental research.

II. Planners select commercial curricula (or find curriculum ideas and activities in textbooks, journal articles, and conference workshops) that are consistent with their vague guiding phrases. Planners don't determine if there is a body of experimental research that confirms the long-term effectiveness and efficiency of the chosen curricula and activities. In other words, they ignore their

**Table 1**

*Steps in the Frame-Model-Lead-Test/Check-Verification Format*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Frame.** | The teacher states the learning task at hand. |
| **Model.** | The teacher provides information (e.g., reveals the logical structure of a verbal association, concept, rule relationship, or cognitive strategy, or shows how to apply this knowledge) verbally or through demonstration. If needed, the teacher repeats the model to make sure all students heard or saw it. |
| **Lead.** | The teacher and students say the information or perform the routine together—several times if needed to ensure that all students do it correctly; that is, are firm. |
| **Test/Check.** | Students perform the task independently, several times if needed to do it correctly. This is a test or check of whether the students have gotten it. It tells the teacher whether she communicated clearly, whether the students' preskills were firm before this task, and whether the students were properly attending and trying. |
| **Verification.** | The teacher provides specific praise—stating what the students learned. |

moral responsibility not to risk harming children.

III. Planners don't determine exactly what each curriculum or activity teaches—in the form of "**students do...**" **statements.** Nor do planners create instructional objectives in the form of "students do..." statements. Instead, instruction is planned around fuzzy phrases such as, "Students will become attentive to environmental print." "Students will appreciate different literary genres." "Students will be able to identify the different sounds in words." Yet, this fuzziness is **functional**; it provides for a wide range of student behavior that will satisfy the vague definitions of attentiveness, appreciation, and sounds identification. **This way, almost any program or method can be made to look effective.**

IV. Planners don't ask whether the curricula and activities are consistent with what is known about effective instruction—issues taken for granted in Direct Instruction—such as (a) big ideas as organizers; (b) strands; (c) logical progression of tasks; (d) strategic integration; (e) a little massed practice, or repetition, at first and distributed practice later; (f) careful attention to fostering acquisition/accuracy, fluency, assembling elements into wholes, generalization/discrimination, retention, and independence; (g) error correction; (h) group and individual responding; (i) precorrections; (j) using positive and negative examples to teach sameness and difference; (k) immediate and delayed testing; (l) quick pace; (m) precise wording; (n) review; (o) reteaching if needed; (p) movement from more to less teacher directed.

V. Planners don't assess students' repertoires (skill sets) as a way to determine who will benefit from core, supplemental, and intervention programs—for example, in reading and math. Instead, they use trial and error—tacking on and later dropping "innovations" such as longer class periods, extra teaching assistants, computer-based instruction, and cooperative learning. This makes it impossible to evaluate any one part of a curriculum but it does enable administrators to claim that they are always improving the curriculum.

VI. Planners use unvalidated assessment methods and instruments, generally qualitative (teacher notes and portfolios of students' "products"), to make a case that the curriculum is working well enough with enough students. Administrators explain student failure as an example of the effects of poverty or lack of family involvement or insufficient funds for materials.

Fortunately for many children, the curricular guidelines, scientific tenets, and moral positions advanced by No Child Left Behind, Reading First, and current consumer and scholarly critiques of teacher training, public school curricula (e.g., whole language and fuzzy math), and low student achievement are fostering a more rational approach to curriculum development, as outlined below.

**Table 2**

*How the Frame-Model-Lead-Test/Check-Verification Format Provides Scaffolding*

1. It provides information in small, learnable amounts.
2. It moves from more teacher directed (the model plus prompts, such as pointing and exaggerating gestures and voice) to less teacher directed (students respond independently).
3. It quickly moves from getting knowledge to using knowledge.
4. It provides sufficient practice on a physical routine, verbal association, concept, rule relationship, or cognitive strategy (one or more steps) to ensure that students are "firm" before the teacher adds more material.
5. It moves at a brisk pace, which captures and sustains attention and facilitates recall.
6. Students' familiarity with this format orients and guides their behavior—attention, cognitive rehearsal before acting, persistence until they all get it.

## *A Model of Competent Curriculum Development*

I. Planners begin with an assessment of students' needs, as determined by (a) screening assessments, (b) what research says about the background knowledge and learning needs of different populations, and (c) pretests for different subjects.

Planners add to this their knowledge of what students will be working on later in school (from state and district curriculum guides and from general knowledge about effective sequences of instruction). For example, if students will be expected to comprehend grade-level text and to read at 90 WCPM in Grade 2, then (in Grade 1) planners know they must ensure that students have mastered phonemic awareness, sound–symbol relationships, and decoding/sounding out; are fluent at grade level text to about 60 WCPM; have a Grade 1 vocabulary; and can answer beginning reading comprehension questions.

II. As much as possible, planners translate information from step I into instructional objectives in the form of do-statements. That is, if a state course of study identifies

### Table 3

*Additional Features of the Frame-Model-Lead-Test/Check-Verification Format*

1. The teacher makes sure all students are **paying attention before** she provides the model. "Everyone, look." Or, "I have to see everyone looking up here at the board…Thank you." The teacher uses a variety of **prompts** to ensure students are attending to and getting precisely the right information throughout the interaction. For example, the teacher moves her finger beneath each letter she is sounding out to make sure students look at each letter the moment the teacher says its sound.

2. The teacher **prepares** students to hear, see, and act by **stating the type of knowledge task** they are working on. "Here's a new sound," or "The next thinking operation is statement inference."

3. Wording is clear, precise, and to the point—to ensure understanding. For example, **all important concepts are pretaught**: Before defining democracy as a political association involving rule by the people, the teacher would teach the concepts of political association, rule, and people. There is no unnecessary verbiage. The same wording is used when teaching the same sort of task. "First word (points to word on a word list). What word? *Malleable.* Next word. What word? *Convince.* Next word. What word? *Divulge.*"

4. The teacher **repeats any of the frame-model-lead-test/check steps if needed** so that all students have attended and responded firmly—that is, they seem to have gotten the communication—before she goes on.

5. The teacher uses a **gesture to signal students to respond** when it is their turn. If students are looking at the teacher (e.g., the teacher is at the board), the "do it" signal could be a "hand drop"; that is, the teacher's hand is raised when she says, "Your turn to read these words the fast way. Get ready…" Then she drops her hand and students start reading.

   However, if students are **not** looking at the teacher (e.g., they are reading passages from a book), the teacher could tap on her book to give the "do it" signal. For example,

   Teacher: Everyone, what's the name of the figure of speech in the line, "And what rough beast, its hour come round at last, Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born"? Think about it…Get ready… (Taps her book to signal "do it.")

   Students: Metaphor.

   Teacher: Yes, metaphor. (Verification.) How do you know? (Asks for the definition previously taught.) (Think…Get ready…Taps her book.)

   Students: A metaphor is a word or phrase that usually has one meaning and is used to talk about another thing, but the comparison is not directly stated.

   Teacher: Yes, the comparison is **not** directly stated. Excellent definition of metaphor.

6. These signals help students respond quickly to (i.e., act on) new information (which aids getting it) and help students respond as a group, as discussed next.

7. The teacher **first** calls on the whole group to respond as one. "Your turn to state the rule about pressure and temperature. Get ready." **Choral responding** enables the teacher to determine that **each** student has gotten the communication. If she called on students individually, she could not tell if a student were merely copying the students who came before. Choral responding also makes instruction move quicker (imagine how long it would take to check each student), so that more is covered. Finally, choral responding gives students the sense of both individual and group mastery, which fosters an obligation to try to do well and not disrupt the group's learning.

8. After group turns, the teacher calls on individual students—especially students who made errors during the choral responding.

## Table 4

*Teaching a Simple Fact With the Frame-Model-Lead-Test/Check-Verification Format*

**Frame:**

Yesterday we studied the Battle at Marathon. Everyone. Who fought in the Battle at Marathon?

Get ready? (Signal)

*The Greeks and Persians.*

Yes, the Greeks and Persians.

What was the date of the Battle at Marathon? Julian.

*490 BC.*

Excellent. 490 BC.

Who won? Amelia.

*The Greeks.*

Correct again. The Greeks. This class is so smart. Now we will study another great battle in the Persian Wars. The Battle at Thermopylae.

**Model:**

Everyone, listen. (Pause) Here's a new fact. The Battle at Thermopylae was fought in 480 BC.

**Lead:**

Say that fact with me. Get ready. (Signal)

*The Battle at Thermopylae was fought in 480 BC.*

**Test/Check:**

When was the Battle at Thermopylae? Get ready. (Signal)

*480 BC.*

**Verification:**

Yes, the Battle at Thermopylae was fought in 480 BC.

(Later, students would learn about the size and composition of each army, battle strategy, the immediate outcomes, and the role of the battle in the larger historical context.)

Note that this format simply and quickly taught the logical structure of a fact; it firmly taught the **association** between a date and an event. However, the teacher must provide opportunities for students to **apply** this knowledge; for example, when comparing and explaining the outcomes of the Battle at Marathon (which the Greeks won), the later Battle at Thermopylae (where the Greeks were overrun), and the later Battle at Platea (which the Greeks again won).

Here is another example.

### *Teaching a Concept (Granite) With the Frame-Model-Lead-Test/Check-Verification Format*

Granite is a higher-order concept (it is embedded in larger concepts, such as things that consist of minerals, rocks, and igneous rocks). Therefore, we have to teach it using both **verbal definitions** and **examples** that enable students to see the defining features. (I freely admit that there may be—undoubtedly are—many shortcomings in the design below. So, consider it to be an opportunity to sharpen your own skills.)

### Exercise 1

**Framing:**

We have been studying igneous rocks. Here's our definition. **Igneous rocks form from the crystallization of minerals in magma.** Everyone, say that definition of igneous rocks.

*Igneous rocks form from the crystallization of minerals in magma.* (Note, the students are advanced enough that the teacher leaves out the lead step. Also, the concepts mineral, magma, and crystallization have already been taught.)

Yes, igneous rocks form from the crystallization of minerals in magma. Today we will examine an igneous rock called **granite**. Everybody, if granite is an igneous rock, **what else do you know about it?** Think…(Signal.)

*It forms from the crystallization of minerals in magma.* (Teacher asks students to make a deduction about granite given the definition of igneous rocks.) Excellent deduction!

**Model:**

Here's the definition of granite. **Granite is an igneous rock consisting of the minerals quartz, feldspar, and mica.** Again, granite is an igneous rock consisting of the minerals quartz, feldspar, and mica.

**Lead:**

Say it with me. Get ready. (Pause…then signal.) *Granite is an igneous rock consisting of the minerals quartz, feldspar, and mica.* (The teacher probably could have left out the lead.)

**Test/Check:**

By yourselves. (Signal.)

*Granite is an igneous rock consisting of the minerals quartz, feldspar, and mica.*

**Verification:**

Excellent saying that definition with so much enthusiasm.

phonemic awareness as an early objective, planners state this objective in the form of student performance. For example,

1. "When the teacher models onset rhyme with mat, hat, and cat, students create new examples that rhyme with at."
2. "When the teacher models the first sound in rim, ram, sit, fit, and man, students say the first, middle, and last sound in these words."

III. Planners are guided by research on sound curriculum design and effective instruction—issues taken for granted in Direct Instruction—such as (a) big ideas as organizers; (b) strands; (c) logical progression of tasks; (d) strategic integration; (e) a little massed practice, or repetition, at first and distributed practice later; (f) careful attention to fostering acquisition/accuracy, fluency, assembling elements into wholes, generalization/discrimination, retention, and independence; (g) error correction; (h) group and individual responding; (i) precorrections; (j) using positive and negative examples to teach sameness and difference; (k) immediate and delayed testing; (l) quick pace; (m) precise wording; (n) review; (o) reteaching if needed; (p) movement from more to less teacher directed.

IV. Planners examine experimental research on design features (e.g., the effects of different instructional sequences) and evaluative field tests (of whole programs) to select programs and methods for teaching the objectives.

V. Planners select valid and reliable instruments for screening, diagnostic, ongoing, and summative assessment.

VI. Administrators routinely collect **quantitative** assessment information about teacher proficiency, student engagement, progress, and summative achievement. Data are used to decide what to change and what to sustain in the curriculum.

## *Instructional Design*

Some features of effective instructional design include the items listed in III above. This section describes one more feature—a format for clear, precise, and effective communication; namely, the ***frame-model-lead-test/check-verification format.*** This general format—found in many Direct Instruction curricula—may be used in

### Table 4 continued

*Teaching a Simple Fact With the Frame-Model-Lead-Test/Check-Verification Format*

**Exercise 2**

**Framing:**

Now, we have already learned the minerals quartz, mica, and feldspar. (Teacher reviews the verbal definitions for each one, shows examples of each one, and has students discriminate among examples of these minerals and other minerals. She uses the format, "Is this quartz?...How do you know?...Is this quartz?...How do you know?...Is this feldspar?...How do you know?")

Now I'll show you examples of granite.

**Model:**

(Teacher holds up or shows slides of granite and labels each one as granite.)
This is granite...Notice the mica, feldspar, and quartz...
This is granite...Notice the mica, feldspar, and quartz...(The examples differ in size, shape, and color of minerals; e.g., pink and gray quartz. But they share the essential and defining features—quartz, mica, and feldspar. Next the teacher juxtaposes examples of granite and **nongranite** and labels them.)
This is granite. Notice the mica, feldspar, and quartz...
This is **not** granite. Notice that it has **no** quartz...
This is granite...

**Test/Check:**

(Now the teacher presents examples of granite and nongranite and asks students to discriminate and identify them.)
Everyone. Is this granite?

*Yes.*

How do you know?

*There is mica, feldspar, and quartz.*

Excellent! Is this granite?

*No.* How do you know?

*It has no quartz.*

Correct!

**Verification:**

(After each example, above, the teacher verifies and praises accurate answers.)
(Throughout, she calls on the whole group and then on individual students.)

any subject and for teaching any form of knowledge: (a) physical routines (handwriting), (b) verbal associations (the names of the 13 original colonies in America), (c) concepts (/m/ says *mmm*, democracy), (d) rule relationships ("First multiply the numbers in the ones column." "No democracy with uneducated citizens can long endure."), and (e) cognitive strategies (multiplication, sounding out words, writing papers). It is highly **focused** on the knowledge task at hand. It moves at a **brisk** pace. It provides sufficient learning **opportunities** for students to get the knowledge being taught. Later, during expanded instruction, it is used to help students apply knowledge. Finally, this format fosters high **engagement**—because it focuses attention, moves quickly, and ends with firm knowledge.

Steps in the frame-model-lead-test/check-verification format are shown in Table 1.

Table 2 shows how the frame-model-lead-test/check-verification format provides effective scaffolding.

Table 3 describes additional features of the frame-model-lead-test/check-verification format.

Table 4 gives an example of the frame-model-lead-test/check-verification format.

The recent creation of important programs such as No Child Left Behind, Reading First, Early Reading First, and others, is an historic opportunity to place education on the sound footing of data and logic, leading to sounder curricula and wiser decisions. However, I don't think that federal and state mandates, position papers, and grant funding requirements alone will change the culture of education, which has for a long time supported nonlogical curricula and program selection based not on data but on the emotional appeal of education jargon. The culture of education will change only to the extent that we conspicuously and consistently demonstrate logical thinking and technical proficiency. ADI

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# *What To Do When Students in* Reading Mastery III *Have Comprehension Problems*

When we start *Reading Mastery Fast Cycle* in kindergarten, many of us have students who are ready for *Reading Mastery III* in first grade. Yet some of those students appear to have trouble "comprehending." It seems as though the workbook tasks are a bit much for them. Is it possible that these first graders are too young and should not be expected to do so much work?

In Direct Instruction we learn that kids can learn what we teach them clearly, regardless of their age, if they have been taught the prerequisite skills. DI folks tend to avoid the "too young" rule generally, as it smacks of the notion of "developmental readiness" which can lead to lowered expectations. When children encounter difficulties, unenlightened educators fall back on the notion that the children are "too young" or they are not developmentally ready. Instead, enlightened educators know to look for missing prerequisite skills that we need to teach. If children test into *RM III* and are experiencing difficulty doing the workbook, here are eight things that I'd want to check first to see what might be the problem.

1. Children can test into *Reading Mastery III* by reading a 136-word passage in 1.5 min for a minimum rate of 90 words per minute. If decoding is not at least 90 words per minute or better, then the effort of decoding might still be interfering with comprehension and may need to be improved as a first priority. And I'd personally say that although 90 is a minimum, if their rate is below 110 per minute, then some work on improving decoding skill would help their comprehension significantly.
2. The simple printing skills may be the culprit. First graders generally print from 15–20 letters per minute, while average third graders write between 45 and 50 letters per minute (Graham, 1999). So with no better than average skills we can anticipate that the workbook will take three times as long for first graders to complete than third graders.

We also know that if printing manuscript skills are not fluent and are slow and laborious, then the effort of writing the letters will interfere with thinking about the answers students are composing (Berninger et al., 1997). How slow is too slow? Fewer than 15 letters per minute for sure, and if a student's writing is above 40 per minute it may not be a problem. My clinical sense is that if the students print much below 30 letters per minute this will make the workbook an onerous chore for them. Manuscript printing skills would need to be a focus of instruction until they are improved.

3. The end of *RM II* and *Fast Cycle* have those great stories about "The Land of Peevish Pets"—and all those rules to learn, etc. Those are demanding and were designed as great preparation for rule based comprehension, which is a focus of *RM III*. If those stories and rules were skipped, it might be a good idea to go back and do those stories.
4. How well does the teacher follow the script? I often find teachers who, to save time, skip some of the comprehension questions during story reading. But many of those questions are designed to prepare students for the workbook. The students are to "get" the answers in the midst of reading the story while the information is fresh. Another way to say this is that the teacher is "activating" children's knowledge of the key information in the story. Later, the exact same questions are asked in the workbook, and the kids are just supposed to be remembering the answers they had previously discussed (activated). It is ironic to hear a teacher, who's skipped the opportunity for the children to learn the information, claim that it's the children's fault when they can't answer the workbook questions that weren't covered.
5. Is the teacher doing the second reading, where they go back and reread the story and ask more questions? A lot of teachers hate to do this, because they feel it is redundant. However, a second reading helps comprehension tremendously. We know clearly, from tons of research, that at this level of decoding skill, children fail to comprehend fully because decoding still requires the bulk of their mental attention. So reading a passage a second time makes the decoding easier for the kids, thus allowing more attention to focus on comprehending the passage.

   And if this weren't enough, it turns out that there are new and different comprehension questions to ask during the second reading. Duh! So if a teacher skips the second reading they miss the opportunity to activate some of the information needed for the workbook.
6. If the teacher is asking all the questions as they are interspersed, is she or he "part-firming" all the missed questions? That is, does the teacher go back and repeat questions that the students had trouble with—to make sure everyone remembers the answer now? If teachers don't part-firm the questions as they go along—is it any wonder the kids don't know the answers to the questions later in writing?

*It is ironic to hear a teacher, who's skipped the opportunity for the children to learn the information, claim that it's the children's fault when they can't answer the workbook questions that weren't covered.*

7. Does the teacher know how to correct a missed comprehension question? A teacher shouldn't just tell the kids the answer—because the point is for them to learn how the answers came out of what they just read. The procedure is to have the students do each of these steps to see if, after doing the step, they can now answer the original question.
   1. Ask the child to read the question (sometimes they don't!) or reread it. *Then if he or she still can't answer, go on to the next step.*
   2. Ask the child to paraphrase the question—and if they can't, ask them to reread the question until they can paraphrase it.

      Sometimes the comprehension failure occurs on the question rather than the story. Once the child understands the question you may get the "Oh!" look and they'll suddenly know the answer. *But if he or she still can't answer the original question, go on to the next step.*
   3. Don't expect children at this age to skim back to find the answer—they can't yet, they're still reading word by word. Instead, show the child the sentence where the answer is and have him or her read it aloud. (After a while you can point out the sentence before the sentence where the answer is—so the child has to read two sentences to get the answer.) If you don't get the "Oh!" look at this point, the kid's forgotten the question. *So if he or she still can't answer the original question, go on to the next step.*
   4. Ask the child to reread the question—and then you read the answer-containing sentence aloud to them. *(Then if he or she still can't answer after that, you've got a real problem! I've never had it get that far, unless they were missing some essential prior "world" knowledge or English vocabulary—and a perceptive teacher will know from the nature of the question what might be confusing to the child.)*
8. Did the teacher do all the workbook questions orally with the students, as the script says to—for many lessons, before asking the kids to write answers? There are at least 10 to 20 lessons of that kind of teaching where the kids practice answering all the workbook questions orally and then go back and do all the same questions in writing at the start of *RM III*. This teaches the kids how to get the answers to the questions before having to do the questions on their own, and first graders who've never done

workbooks before really need this step. This is essential instruction—which is often skipped by teachers—to save time—and then later they're disappointed when kids don't know how to answer questions on their own.

So first check and/or fix all of these eight things. If the children were still unsuccessful at the workbooks, although you couldn't say they were "too young," you could say they lacked the needed prerequisite skills to do *RM III*. Of course, as you can imagine, this is about as likely as Ken Goodman endorsing DI, but, hey, it could happen. ADI

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ZIG ENGELMANN

# *Response to* Time *Magazine's Report on Dyslexia*

There are lots of problems with the quasi-scientific analysis of dyslexia reported in *Time*, titled, "The New Science of Dyslexia." Basically what they discovered using MRIs was that the problem was not "visual," but associated with language. From this information, they launched into a daisy chain of inferences, none of which are very sensible because they still believe in dyslexia. Here's the major problem with the analysis: If it's true that students in places like the worst slums in Baltimore and rural Mississippi taught with DI have 100% of the children reading—not guessing or memorizing—by the end of kindergarten, something is seriously wrong with the portrait of dyslexia. After all, these students exhibit all of the "warning signs" referred to in the analysis. When they come into kindergarten, they can't rhyme, they can't alliterate, they can't blend orally presented words, and they have lots of problems figuring out unique sound patterns (such as repeating something like 4, 4, 4, 4 and yet are able to repeat four or more random digits). So they should all be dyslexic, and indeed historical performance records show that virtually all of them had been greatly retarded in reading, with the average fifth grader stumbling about on a weak second-grade level. Some of the schools that currently have no nonreaders coming out of K historically had end-of-first-graders scoring at the 6–9th percentile on standardized achievement tests. Yet, the new science tells us that we can expect 1/5 of the population to have dyslexia. That's a 20% failure rate to teach reading in a fat-cat suburb where parents care about and influence the schools, and where they are lavishly funded with aides, material, and whatever.

The second major problem has to do with their data on early intervention and what works. Shaywitz asserts, "The data we have don't show any one program that is head and shoulders above the rest." Obviously, Shaywitz needs more accurate and extensive data, like that from City Springs where the average/median first grader in 2003 scored at the 99th percentile on achievement tests. And fifth graders reach the 87th, making City Springs the number one school in reading in Baltimore in both the first and fifth grades. It certainly couldn't be because City Springs has 99% blacks and over 90% free lunch, or because 6 years ago it was the 117th school in a district of 117 schools, or that the kids scored below the 10th percentile in reading and math in all grades, or because not one student in Grade 3 or Grade 5 passed the Maryland state reading test. What then caused this amazing change—the water, a prayer campaign, or some form of multi-vitamin diet?

More to the point, because this kind of improvement has only been achieved by Direct Instruction, and because it has been done in more than one school, and in fact, in any school that implements according to the numbers, there does seem to be one program that is head and shoulders above the others.

Stated differently, I'll bet the authors of the new science of dyslexia, and Shaywitz $100,000 that they can't produce one 5-year-old child who is prejudged to be in the normal IQ range that can't be taught to read in a timely manner. They can submit as many as 100 virgins (kids who have not been screwed by learning that Obuh is for baby). These folks can use whatever screening methods they seem to think predicts "dyslexia." I'm dead serious about this bet.

Third, and perhaps most relevant, the neurological evidence sucks. Shaywitz—the same Shaywitz that asserts there is no "superior" program—also asserts, "The good news is we really understand the steps of how you become a...skilled reader." That's impossible. Unless you understand the task facing the naive learner, you couldn't possibly understand the various functions that would have to be in place. The MRI evidence does not reveal the task. It just generates the correlations, which in turn generate fragmented and often stupid interpretations. In other words, the "scientists" play this game: We know that these kids are "dyslexic" and those other guys are normal. Let's find some correlations based on our MRI data and from those data infer what it all means." That last part is where some form of miracle must occur. The activity in different parts of the brain has nothing to do with the content that is processed by the brain, only the loci of activity. Nobody's disputing the MRI evidence. It's the interpretation that sucks.

The notion that the kid's mind must hear the sounds of the word *cat* are partly true and partly fabrication. If our language were like Italian, with only a few exceptions, a case could be made for this simplistic idea. In fact, the process must be far more sophisticated given that by the end of the first grade the kid will be expected to decode these words: *of, is, was, who, were, you, have, front, school,* etc. None of these are "regular." The set of more common words used to compose the most elementary sentence are replete with irregulars. Try to make up a simple story in which words are composed exclusively of letters that make the same sound.

*These cats have no spots.* The following letters have more than one sound in this sentence: *t, h, e, o, s.* Note that the *e* makes no sound in two words.

Shaywitz's observation that some poor readers had their phoneme analyzer, word analyzers, and automatic detector more strongly linked to their memory processors than to language centers is interpreted to mean that they spend more time memorizing words than normals do. The "classic" dyslexic, in contrast, had an overactive phoneme producer and an underactive word analyzer and automatic detector. So what? Is this a cause of dyslexia or an effect of instruction that failed?

Equally important, if the activity pattern is different, there must be some difference in the "content" that the brain is representing. In other words, if the activity is more extensive, what the kid is doing when trying to figure out the word involves more steps or considerations than the kid who knows the game of decoding English words. The brain is not goofy. The kid's logic is. The poor little guy may be trying to figure out whether the word is **baby** because some jerk told him that *b* is for baby, and he sees a *b*, right there in the word. Or is it a *d*? If it's a *d*, the word must be **dog**, but it's not shaped like **dog**. Is there a picture somewhere that shows what that word is? What did the teacher say? She talked about this word, or I think it was this word. It was some word and she said something about a bowel sound.

> *More to the point, because this kind of improvement has only been achieved by Direct Instruction, and because it has been done in more than one school, and in fact, in any school that implements according to the numbers, there does seem to be one program that is head and shoulders above the others.*

But given that the "scientists" don't understand the nature of the content or how it precisely correlates with brain patterns, they are left with the age-old scientific procedure for filling in the space between what the correlation shows and what it all means—make it up as you go along.

Here's what they would need to know (in addition to some facts about the extent to which dyslexia can be eliminated) before making the kind of proclamations about nonreaders that they make.

1. The behavior of the brain with normal children **as they are learning specific things associated with beginning reading**. Here's what they'll find. The normal kid initially has the whole brain activated when learning new things. The reason is simple. The kid doesn't know which relationships are the keys to reading, and the brain is doing its thing and trying out a large number of possibilities. There would be no difference between the dyslexic and the normal during this period. Later on, the kid who will later learn to read adequately will not have anywhere near as much activity in learning new material than the dyslexic because this guy has the right information foundation. The steps she uses to analyze the words work. She identifies words correctly. The dyslexic has to keep searching.
2. The behavior of deaf children who learn to read but who are unable to speak. Whatever their behavior is it would tend to thrash some of the assumptions about "phonemes." If the kid doesn't hear or speak but learns to read, the patterns of brain activation would be very revealing about what we're really talking about and what the language centers on the left side of the brain (most of them) are actually analyzing.
3. The changes in the brain of "young dyslexics" (those in possibly Grades 2 or 3 who have the "classic" profile) when they are taught with a **highly** effective program, a la Direct Instruction, which will tend to induce a high percentage of cor-

> rect responses from the beginning rather than the kind of behavior you see when teachers are using sloppy phonics programs. This data, correlated with data about specific changes in reading behavior, would yield good information about exactly what misconceptions about reading the kids had and how the changes in the MRI pattern were correlated with specific details in their word-reading behavior.

In summary, the MRI scientists' interpretation of brain-function data is what is logically referred to as a false dilemma or an argument from ignorance. The scientists observe a correlation between brain patterns and not learning to read.

The possibilities are:

1. The brain pattern caused the nonlearning.
2. The nonlearning caused the brain pattern.
3. The interaction of a third variable caused both the nonreading and the brain pattern.

These scientists apparently don't consider possibilities 2 or 3, but proclaim that the brain pattern causes the nonlearning. There is no question that there are individual differences in reading performance; however, if the kid can find his way into the right classroom and follow simple directions, he can be taught to read in a timely manner.

An interesting footnote about the MRI data is that it is related to sounds and manipulation of sounds. Phonemic awareness is now a big deal—even for these scientists—but DI had it in 1968. That's one, but only one, of the reasons it worked in 1968.

BOB DIXON

# Emos Thuogths on Dyslexai

The medical community has recently brought its high-tech gadgets into the field of reading, with a special emphasis on poor reading. A hot topic of late is "Dyslexia and MRIs." *Time* had a feature on dyslexia (July 28, 2003). Zig Engelmann wrote a pithy response that is printed in this issue.

A friend of mine is an emergency room physician. I was telling him a little about this MRI stuff related to reading. He couldn't picture the value of an MRI for studying reading behavior. I can't either. On the one hand, I don't know squat about what you can and can't do with an MRI. I thought that MRIs revealed physiological anomalies—tumors and the like. What I do know is that relating behavior to neurological behavior is a very tricky business. Finger and Stein, in their book *Brain Damage and Recovery*, forcefully conclude that the *minority* of data support any sort of brain theory revolving around localization of function. Put another way, the data point toward the notion that many—very, VERY many—parts and different regions of the brain interact in unknown ways, in association with any given behavior. Research on sea slug neurology strongly supports something like a "holographic" model of even the most simple and observable neurological systems.

I'm way out of my league here with MRIs and CAT scans and electroencephalographs and the like. Staying closer to home, I'd like to focus on dyslexia from a purely analytical point of view. As Engelmann and Carnine point out in *Theory of Instruction*, Direct Instruction is a rationalist–empiricist approach to instruction. This is pretty much the same as plain old science. Empiricism alone, although it sounds scientific, is like throwing mud against the wall to see what sticks. First, *things have to make sense*. It's possible (and common, I'd argue) to invest a great deal of time and effort in an intervention study that makes no sense whatsoever to begin with. We often see studies that "show" something can't be true, logically. When we dig a little, we find all sorts of errors and weaknesses in research design.

That's a rather long way of saying that I don't take much research on dyslexia very seriously because it doesn't make any sense.

Dyslexia is defined like this:

> Dyslexia is a neurologically based, often familial disorder that interferes with the acquisition of language. Varying in the degrees of severity, it is manifested by difficulties in receptive and expressive language, including phonological processing, in reading, writing, spelling, handwriting, and sometimes arithmetic. Dyslexia is not the result of lack of motivation, sensory impairment, inadequate instructional or environmental opportunities, but may occur together with these conditions. (Orton Dyslexia Society, 1994, now called the International Dyslexia Association.)

One obvious problem with this definition is the notion of "inadequate instructional or environmental opportunities." Poor instruction can't cause dyslexia, according to this definition. Therefore, poor instruction causes tons of reading problems that can't be categorized as dyslexia (because dyslexia is a neurological impairment). Poverty can't cause dyslexia. As it happens, poverty is about the only thing that really correlates well with reading failure, but all that failure can't cause dyslexia. The definition above suggests that a poor child could *also* have dyslexia: apparently, a severe double whammy.

The International Dyslexia Association claims that about 4% of kids have dyslexia. If that were true, then there would be massive numbers of poor readers without dyslexia. Although still shying away from medicine, I'd be curious to see the differences—MRI, CAT, etc.—between the majority of poor readers and those neurologically impaired dyslexic kids. Mostly what I've seen is discussions of how MRIs change as a child changes from being a very poor reader to a good reader. Maybe I'm naive, but wouldn't we pretty much expect the electrochemical behavior of the brain to change in some way as a person goes from struggling hopelessly with a highly complex cognitive activity to mastering it?

If dyslexia is a neurological impairment that causes reading difficulties that differ from those caused by poor instruction or exacerbated by poverty, then what are those differences in difficulties. The Dyslexia folks don't tell us what the differences are, but they at least list the difficulties that dyslexic kids have:

1. early difficulties in acquiring phonic skills
2. a high proportion of errors in oral reading
3. difficulty in extracting the sense from written material without substantial rereading
4. slow reading speed
5. inaccurate reading, omission of words
6. frequent loss of place when reading
7. an inability to skim through or scan over reading matter
8. a high degree of distractibility when reading
9. perceived distortion of text (words may seem to float off the page or run together)
10. a visually irritating glare from white paper or whiteboards.

*The International Dyslexia Association claims that about 4% of kids have dyslexia. If that were true, then there would be massive numbers of poor readers without dyslexia.*

I'm hazarding a guess that numbers 1–8 are common among many poor readers who don't have a neurological impairment. There is no way I can think of to differentiate dyslexic kids from other poor readers based on these behaviors. (Numbers 2 and 5 seem a bit redundant to me.) Number 10 is probably not unique to poor readers at all: Under certain circumstances, I suppose anyone could find white paper or whiteboards a bit irritating, visually speaking. I suppose. It sounds fishy.

Number 9 seems to me to be the one potentially differentiating behavior and probably the one that inspired the notion of a neurological impairment to begin with. My earliest recollections of examples of dyslexic behavior didn't have much to do with "floating words," but a lot to do with what I guess we could generally call "reversal." The examples involved "seeing" letters (or numbers) backward, seeing letters transposed, and seeing words reversed. While normal children look at a capital letter **R** and see **R**, dyslexic kids are purported to see **Я**. Normal children see receive; dyslexic children see recieve. Very little of this screwed up perception would actually manifest itself very directly in reading. If a reader actually sees **Яed**, for instance, that child is most likely to say /rrĕd/. If the child "sees" **Я** and thinks it's **R** that's not going to cause a decoding problem. If a child sees **Яeb**, that could cause a decoding problem, but most letters, written backward, are just backward letters.

Similarly, if the only problem is that a reader looks at **receive** and "sees" **recieve** that alone isn't going to cause any reading difficulty. Look at all the people who *write* **recieve** but who think they've spelled the word right, and can certainly read what they wrote.

I suspect strongly that the only time a reversal of letters results in a reading error is when both versions are themselves words, such as **angle** and **angel**. If that is due to a neurological impairment, then we're *all* neurologically impaired, one time or another. (Do neurological impairments come and go sporadically? Not likely.)

That leaves us with reversing words as one potential discriminator of the neurologically impaired dyslexics and just plain, ordinary poor readers. If a child comes across **was**, and truly sees it in reverse, then, granted, the child will say **saw**. Same thing with **no** and **on**, **not** and **ton**, and even **desserts** for **stressed**. It seems, though, too much of a coincidence that the examples given of "seeing words backward" are words that actually spell *something*, backward or forward: saw and was, and so on.

If a reader literally sees words backward (and I'd call that a neurological problem any day), then wouldn't we see kids trying to decode lots of other words—words that don't spell anything backward—very frequently? I think we would.

Here is a kid who is a very poor reader. Let's say that means, minimally, that for starters, the kid is struggling mightily with just decoding. Under those circumstances, I think we'd all agree that comprehension is likely to be extremely low. If such a child literally sees words backward, then why, during oral reading, doesn't she look at **the** and decode it as /ĕth/? She would *have* to do that if she has a neurological perception problem that causes her to see words backwards. Has she just memorized an association: When you see "e-t-h," say **the**? I suppose that's theoretically possible. And she memorized, when you see "e-m-o-s," say **some**. But that would mean that she has done so for nearly every word she encounters. She has an incredible memory, not only because the vast number of words she has memorized, but because there are no alpha-phonemic clues whatsoever to help master the associations. Someone has probably told her time and time again that when she sees—whatever, **Я** or **R**—she should say /rr/. But somehow, when she sees "d-e-r," she says **red**. I'll bet she doesn't ever say **der** when she sees **red**. Not only are these incredible associations without phonemic prompts, they're actually completely loaded with false prompts.

And before she made these fantastic associations, would there not have been a period where she did say **eth** for **the**, **emos** for **some**, and **der** for **red**? In short, if a child sees letters in reverse, that usually doesn't cause reading problems, and if a child sees letters transposed, that doesn't cause any reading problems except in the sense that it causes all of us problems from time to time (e.g., angel and angle). If a child sees *words* in reverse and reads practically anything at all correctly, that's a notable miracle. In terms of reading, dyslexic kids can't possibly be "seeing" what they are (or have often been) purported to see.

Kids make other reading errors that are difficult to attribute to a neurological impairment. Kids confuse **were** and **where**. All poor readers, predictably, do the same, and so do I, from time to time. It's nonsense to postulate on a neurological impairment that accounts for both "not seeing" something that is there (when a reader says **were** but the word is **where**), and moreover, for "seeing" something that isn't there (when a reader says **where** but the word is **were**). The latter would be a cousin of hallucination. (Maybe this is what the dyslexia people mean by "floating words." Random words float onto and off of the page.)

*Words that are very similar to one another are easy for anyone to confuse, just as any two things in the universe that are very similar to one another are also easy to confuse: certain dogs and wolves, for instance.*

Words that are very similar to one another are easy for anyone to confuse, just as any two things in the universe that are very similar to one another are also easy to confuse: certain dogs and wolves, for instance. If the word is **elephant** and the oral reader says **ship**, then I'm betting on pretty severe but idiosyncratic brain dysfunction. Or a middle-school kid jerking my chain.

The dyslexia people say that dyslexic kids demonstrate "inaccurate reading, including omission of words." I agree that omitting words is a subcategory of inaccurate reading. "Inaccurate reading" seems like a pretty broad category that could even include *adding words that aren't there*. More hallucination. Literally "not seeing" a word that is actually there is a lot like "not seeing" a letter that is actually there.

Maybe someone is using spelling examples to support the "reversal" hypothesis and then generalizing them to reading. For instance, one might postulate that a kid who writes "receive" as "recieve" sees letters reversed. Sometimes the simplest explanation is the best: The kid can't spell the word, period. Generalizing from spelling to reading is highly questionable in general, as well. Lots of people, including many adults, can read "receive" without any difficulty but struggle with spelling it. I'd say the same is true, only more so, for "mnemonics."

A kid who writes letters backward just hasn't learned to write them forward. Doing so usually isn't a reading problem and it isn't a spelling problem: It's a problem with learning that directionality is a critical discriminating feature for precious few concepts in the universe, including letters and numbers. Well, at least it's a problem of learning the conventional way to write letters and numbers. Reversing letters like i-e and e-i is a challenge for nearly everyone because both are legitimate and common spellings for /ē/. If there is a lot of evidence that dyslexic kids spell **receive** as **erceive** or **recevie**, then I have to give a little thought to the possibility that someone is seeing letters transposed and then transferring that to spelling. I wouldn't give it much thought, though.

In short, if dyslexic kids routinely see letters backward, letters reversed, or words backward, or if words routinely float on and off the page, then it would, in fact, occur *routinely* (and randomly), not predictably, as it does. Why would kids always make errors that can very easily be explained in terms of normal concept learning and almost *never* make errors that can't be?

There is no analytical basis for postulating a neurological impairment for differentiating some poor readers from others, except when a kid verifiably has a brain dysfunction. That being the case, there is no firm theoretical basis upon which one might base empirical studies. I think it is fair to characterize this opinion as one well founded in Direct Instruction theory. I can imagine a lot of well designed experiments that would contradict the notion that a neurological impairment differentiates some poor readers from all the rest, but why bother? I, personally, like the idea of saving the incredible resources associated with scientific experimentation for helping us answer questions for which we don't know the answers.

Right here, at the very end of this article, I have to confess that not only the *Time* article and all other current interest in dyslexia are much ado about nothing, but that this article is as well! It's not like the question of how to teach nonreaders and poor readers how to read well is a big mystery. Far from it. As a practical matter, the causes themselves of poor reading—real things like poverty or fanciful things like dyslexia—don't matter. Although, personally, I'd like to see poverty eliminated, it isn't going to be in my lifetime, and poverty isn't a *direct* cause of poor reading, anyway. While people are sitting around talking about causes—me included, by virtue of this article—some kids are out there this moment benefiting from the *solutions* to reading problems and underlying language deficiencies, and millions more ought to be. ADI

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TINA ERRTHUM, Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy, Colorado Springs, Colorado

# *The Failures of a Teacher Education Program: A Need for Change*

As a recent graduate of Great Midwest University's* (GMU) teacher education program, I am compelled to express my concerns regarding the education preservice teachers receive at GMU and how (I feel) the program neglects training preservice teachers to be both effective and efficient teachers.

My story starts like that of most preservice teachers. I knew I wanted to be a teacher and chose GMU because of its reputation of having a strong education program. The College of Education at GMU is typically characterized as one of the best in the country and one from which school districts from all over seek graduates. As a 1st-year student, I had confidence in and entrusted my college education to this program. I had the simple and reasonable expectation that if I invested my time, hard work, and money in this establishment, I would graduate knowing **what** to teach and **how** to teach it. Now that I have completed the course work, finished two very different student teaching experiences (one of which I had to "discover" on my own), and acquired a teaching job, I realize that GMU's teacher education program failed to meet my expectations.

As a recent student and now an educator, I am aware of many of the factors involved in educating a group of learners, and I have heard the many excuses as to why a child may or may not be able to learn (home life, socioeconomic class, a learning disability, etc.). I have come to believe, however, that regardless of the excuse, the bottom line is this: If a child fails to learn, a teacher has failed to teach. It is the teacher's job to teach the students. Thus, it is the teacher education program's job to teach the preservice teachers how to teach in order to maximize student learning. Just as teachers must be held accountable for students' learning in the classroom, so must the teacher education program be held accountable for preservice teachers' learning in the teacher education program. Until such responsibilities are recognized and teacher trainers are held accountable, excuses for teacher's shortcomings will continue.

I do not regret receiving my education at GMU. I learned a lot both in and outside of the classroom that has made me the person I am today. But I believe that GMU's teacher education program failed to teach me the things I needed to know to teach effectively and efficiently. I cannot help thinking about how much more confident and capable I could have been when going into my first classroom had my coursework actually taught me what I needed to know. I do not feel that I am alone in recognizing the shortcomings of the teacher-training program at GMU. Furthermore, I do not feel that GMU's teacher education program is unique in its shortcomings. Rather, the shortcomings seem to be typical of many teacher education programs around the country.

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*fictitious name

As I neared the end of my college education program, I (like many others at this point in their teaching careers) realized that the courses I was required to take failed to prepare me for my professional career as a teacher. If GMU is to maintain its "one of the best" reputation, change must occur.

## *Student Teaching Experiences*

As stated earlier, I had two very different student teaching experiences. The first came as a result of my disappointment in the training I was receiving at GMU. I had questions about education that were not being answered in my courses at GMU. Therefore, I sought answers elsewhere and did not stop until I found them. My research led me to seek a student teaching placement other than that arranged through the teacher education program at GMU. That atypical placement is described below as my first student teaching experience. The second student teaching experience (also described below) is a typical student teaching experience arranged through GMU.

My first student teaching experience was in a second-grade classroom at a school in which Direct Instruction is used in combination with Core Knowledge (Core Knowledge Charter School in Verona, Wisconsin). Direct Instruction is a highly structured approach that is grounded in research (Adams & Engelmann, 1996). Skills and content are carefully sequenced and presented in scripted formats. It entails the use of flexible ability grouping, frequent assessments, and teaching at an accelerated pace to ensure the mastery of basic skills. In this school, Direct Instruction programs were used for reading, spelling, writing, and math. The Core Knowledge curricula were used for social studies, science, and some language arts instruction. The Core Knowledge Sequence (Hirsch, 1995) tells teachers **what** to teach, but it does not tell teachers **how** to teach that content; therefore, teachers applied what they knew about Direct Instruction methods to teach the Core Knowledge sequence. Both the Direct Instruction programs and the Core Knowledge curricula are sequenced so that new knowledge builds on previous knowledge. In the Core Knowledge social studies curriculum, for example, students are taught to locate the seven continents on the map in kindergarten. In first grade, students are taught to locate the major oceans and the countries of North America. In second grade, they learn the geographic location of all 50 states. As a second-grade teacher, I did not deviate from the second-grade sequence.

> *By the end of my first student teaching experience, I had witnessed the positive effects of teaching coherent, well-sequenced curricula using research-based methods.*

Even though this was my first student teaching experience, I was incredibly confident in my teaching because I was given, in specific terms, the content that I was to teach. In no way did I feel this stifled my "creativity," nor did I feel it was an insult to my capabilities as a teacher. Being an inexperienced teacher, and having had no course at GMU that informed me of what constitutes a quality second-grade curriculum, I needed to be told what second graders are expected to learn. With specific curricula and research-based methods of teaching, I was able to teach effectively and efficiently. The students were motivated to learn because the content was interesting and challenging, and they could relate what they were learning at any given time to what they had learned earlier.

I realized through this first student teaching experience that my job is to teach, not to spend hundreds of hours trying to develop a curriculum appropriate for this particular classroom and ONLY this particular classroom (as I had been taught at GMU). Are actors expected to write their own scripts? Are farmers expected to build their own tractors? Why should a teacher be expected to create his or her own curriculum?

By the end of my first student teaching experience, I had witnessed the positive effects of teaching coherent, well-sequenced curricula using research-based methods. I assumed that every school and classroom would have similar instructional tools. But, as my second student teaching experience began, I quickly realized that my assumption was wrong.

My second student teaching experience took place in a fifth-grade classroom in a "typical" elementary school. It was the type of experience, I feel, that GMU attempts to prepare its preservice teachers for. In theory, it sounded like it should have been a student teacher's dream come true. My cooperating teacher let me teach what I wanted, how I wanted, and as much as I wanted. I was given complete control of the classroom with minimal guidance because she wanted me to "develop my own style of teaching." I hit the ground running but received an early and severe shock to the system when I realized what "complete control" and "minimal guidance" really meant. Not only was I responsible for the well being of each child, but I was also expected to teach them—to decide what they needed to learn, to figure out what they already knew, develop units, lesson plans, and tools for assessment. In addition, I was supposed to be developing "my own style of teaching." But where was I supposed to begin? I had no idea what fifth graders knew, were expected to know, or what I should teach them. I started by asking myself the obvious question, "What concepts and skills do I need to teach?" I remembered from my first student teaching experience that my answer would come in the form of a curriculum. I asked my cooperating teacher, one of the best teachers in the school according to a fellow staff member, for a curriculum guide to "guide" me in developing units and lesson plans. She thought for a moment and replied, "I haven't seen one of those in years." She went on to admit that the district curriculum guides are of little value to the classroom teacher because they are so general. She said that a teacher could make *any* lesson match a "guideline" (I do remember learning that at GMU).

All I wanted was some guidance, someone or something to tell me what to teach. How can one school not deviate from a curriculum, while another places little value on having one? My teacher did not like teaching with textbooks, but had no supplemental material for me to use. Once again, she wanted me to "develop my own" curriculum and method of instruction (also known as "reinventing the wheel"). The lack of guidance and consistency in what to teach and how to teach became very exhausting and frustrating. I realized that each teacher in the building taught different, self-created curricula that were not required to be sequential with mine or with each other's. Some students had already been exposed to the content I decided to teach, some students had absolutely no prior knowledge about it, while still others may have been taught a great deal about the content such that my self-created curriculum just repeated everything they had already learned. Like any 1st year teacher, I expected to be exhausted by the demands of planning. But the overwhelming feeling of frustration was a direct result of never having confidence in what I was teaching and how I was teaching it. I realized that if instruction is to be effective and efficient, it must be sequential. Knowledge builds on knowledge. I realized each day that the lack of consistency in the content being taught and the method of instruction being used at this "typical" school had a direct and detrimental effect on student learning.

> *Once again, she wanted me to "develop my own" curriculum and method of instruction (also known as "reinventing the wheel").*

As my student teaching experiences ended, I analyzed and reflected on what I learned from them. I realized from the outset that my first experience was going to be different from what I had learned at GMU, but I expected GMU to have done its job in preparing me for the second experience. However, that was not the case. I do not remember ever being taught what or how to teach in my courses at GMU. Instead, I wrote two "reflection" papers, downloaded a lesson plan off the internet, created bulletin boards, played games, and scrapbooked a portfolio. These activities simply did not prepare me to teach. The tools and knowledge that made my second experience manageable were those I taught myself or learned during my first experience. It was during that first experience at the Direct Instruction/Core Knowledge school that I learned to deliver effective and efficient instruction using content-specific curricula and methods of instruction grounded in research.

As I embark upon my 1st year of "real" teaching at Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy, I look forward to applying what I learned during my first student teaching experience and learning even more about how and what to teach. Not to use the most effective an efficient instruction approaches known, I feel, would be a disservice to my students, school, community, state, and country.

I am fully aware of the fact that what I have written is my opinion, based on what I experienced in the teacher education program at GMU and my experiences as a student teacher in the two different classrooms. But I also know, being an education major, that I am not alone in the feelings of disappointment and frustration about the failures of the program from which I graduated. But there comes a point when one needs to stop complaining and start taking action. In my case, I am challenging GMU to critically evaluate its current teacher education program, look carefully at what teachers are and are not being taught, and look at the research that documents instructional practices that are effective and efficient. The program has the potential to graduate truly competent and confident educators, but it is not doing so at present. What the program offers now is "pretty good." Pretty good will never be good enough.

There once was a pretty good student
Who sat in a pretty good class
And was taught by a pretty good teacher,
Who always let pretty good pass.
He wasn't terrific at reading,
He wasn't a whiz-bang at math.

But for him education was leading
Straight down a pretty good path.
He didn't find school too exciting,
But he wanted to do pretty well,
And he did have some trouble with writing,
And nobody had taught him to spell.
When doing arithmetic problems,
Pretty good was regarded as fine,
Five plus five needn't always add up to be ten,
A pretty good answer was nine.
The pretty good class that he sat in
Was part of a pretty good school
And the student was not an exception,
On the contrary, he was the rule.
The pretty good school that he went to
Was there in a pretty good town.
And nobody there seemed to notice
He could not tell a verb from a noun.
The pretty good student in fact was
Part of a pretty good mob.
And the first time he knew what he lacked was
When he looked for a pretty good job.
It was then, when he sought a position,
He discovered that life could be tough.
And soon had a sneaky suspicion
Pretty good might not be good enough.
The pretty good town in our story
Was part of a pretty good state,
Which had pretty good aspirations,
And prayed for a pretty good fate.
There once was a pretty good nation,
Pretty proud of the greatness it had
Which learned much too late,
If you want to be great,
Pretty good is, in fact, pretty bad.

—Charles Osgood,
*The Osgood File*, 1988 ADI

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DALE FEIK

# "Mastery—Why and How"

### Why I attended Zig Engelmann's 2-day session, "Mastery—Why and How," at the 29th Annual National Direct Instruction Conference and Institutes in Eugene, Oregon, July, 2003:

"You can grow physically only about an inch a year, but if you work hard, you can grow enormously during a year." "The more you learn, the greater the number of choices you'll be able to make later in life and the more you'll be able to help others."

Zig Engelmann emphasized the first statement during his presentation, "Mastery—Why and How," and wrote the second statement at the end of one of his handouts. After serving low-performing students for over 30 years as a public school teacher, I can certainly say that I quit growing physically a long time ago, but that my students and I have continued to grow enormously during each year because of Zig Engelmann's capability and desire to help others.

Zig Engelmann has devoted his life to writing programs that work because they are based upon a sound instructional design and a sound analysis of human behavior. I attended his "Mastery—Why and How" presentation 3 separate years, and realized more each year why his programs work. They are based upon the life of a person who has learned how to motivate others to work hard by the role he has played in creating a learning/teaching model with a written curriculum unmatched in the health-care profession.

I just finished rereading the two handouts Zig used as his lecture notes. They are filled with the details necessary to understand how to teach to "Mastery." If you want to learn why teaching to "Mastery" is the critical element of Direct Instruction programs, and learn from the master, sign up for Zig Engelmann's session at the 30th ADI Conference and Institutes. I hope to see you there. ADI

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Dale Feik: Ed.D, Reading Education; M.Ed., Counseling; M.S. Special Education; last assignment: self-contained classroom of 15 elementary students labeled as having emotional disabilities; previous assignments: resource room teacher for sixth- through ninth-grade students, coordinator of an elementary Title I reading project; retired from teaching in 1999 after serving low-performing students for over 30 years.

# *Everyone likes getting mail…*

ADI maintains a listserv discussion group called DI. This free service allows you to send a message out to all subscribers to the list just by sending one message. By subscribing to the DI list, you will be able to participate in discussions of topics of interest to DI users around the world. There are currently 500+ subscribers. You will automatically receive in your email box all messages that are sent to the list. This is a great place to ask for technical assistance, opinions on curricula, and hear about successes and pitfalls related to DI.

**To subscribe to the list, send the following message from your email account:**

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In the message portion of the email simply type:

subscribe di

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**You send your news and views out to the list subscribers, like this:**

To: di@lists.uoregon.edu

Subject: *Whatever describes your topic.*

Message: *Whatever you want to say.*

The list is retro-moderated, which means that some messages may not be posted if they are inappropriate. For the most part inappropriate messages are ones that contain offensive language or are off-topic solicitations.

# *Summer 2004 Direct Instruction Training Opportunities*

The Association for Direct Instruction is pleased to announce the following intensive DI training conferences. These events will provide comprehensive training presented by some of the most skilled trainers in education. Plan now to attend one of these professional development conferences.

**Save these dates:**

**7th Southeast DI Conference and Institutes**

June 22–25, 2004
Radisson Hotel Orlando
at Universal Studio
Orlando, Florida

**30th National Direct Instruction Conference and Institutes**

July 18–22, 2004
Eugene Hilton and
Conference Center
Eugene, Oregon

**Other regional conferences to be announced in November, 2003.**

# Videotapes on the Direct Instruction Model

ADI has an extensive collection of videos on Direct Instruction. These videos are categorized as informational, training, or motivational in nature. The informational tapes are either of historical interest or were produced to describe Direct Instruction. The training tapes have been designed to be either stand-alone training or used to supplement and reinforce live training. The motivational tapes are keynote presentations from past years of the National Direct Instruction Conference.

## Informational Tapes

***Where It All Started***—45 minutes. Zig teaching kindergarten children for the Engelmann-Bereiter pre-school in the 60s. These minority children demonstrate mathematical understanding far beyond normal developmental expectations. This acceleration came through expert teaching from the man who is now regarded as the "Father of Direct Instruction," Zig Engelmann. Price: $10.00 (includes copying costs only).

***Challenge of the 90s: Higher-Order thinking***—45 minutes, 1990. Overview and rationale for Direct Instruction strategies. Includes home-video footage and Follow Through. Price: $10.00 (includes copying costs only).

***Follow Through: A Bridge to the Future***—22 minutes, 1992. Direct Instruction Dissemination Center, Wesley Elementary School in Houston, Texas, demonstrates approach. Principal, Thaddeus Lott, and teachers are interviewed and classroom footage is shown. Created by Houston Independent School District in collaborative partnership with Project Follow Through. Price: $10.00 (includes copying costs only).

***Direct Instruction***—black and white, 1 hour, 1978. Overview and rationale for Direct Instruction compiled by Haddox for University of Oregon College of Education from footage of Project Follow Through and Eugene Classrooms. Price: $10.00 (includes copying costs only).

## Training Tapes

***The Elements of Effective Coaching***—3 hours, 1998. Content in *The Elements of Effective Coaching* was developed by Ed Schaefer and Molly Blakely. The video includes scenarios showing 27 common teaching problems, with demonstrations of coaching interventions for each problem. A common intervention format is utilized in all scenarios. Print material that details each teaching problem and the rationale for correcting the problem is provided. This product should be to used to supplement live DI coaching training and is ideal for Coaches, Teachers, Trainers. Price...$395.00 Member Price...$316.00

***DITV—Reading Mastery 1, 2, 3 and Fast-Cycle Preservice and Inservice Training***—The first tapes of the Level I and Level II series present intensive preservice training on basic Direct Instruction teaching techniques and classroom management strategies used in *Reading Mastery* and the equivalent lesson in *Fast-Cycle*. Rationale is explained. Critical techniques are presented and demonstrated. Participants are led through practical exercises. Classroom teaching demonstrations with students are shown. The remaining tapes are designed to be used during the school year as inservice training. The tapes are divided into segments, which present teaching techniques for a set of of upcoming lessons. Level III training is presented on one videotape with the same features as described above. Each level of video training includes a print manual.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Reading Mastery I* (10 Videotapes) | $150.00 |
| *Reading Mastery II* (5 Videotapes) | $75.00 |
| *Reading Mastery III* (1 Videotape) | $25.00 |
| Combined package *(Reading Mastery I–III)* | $229.00 |

***Corrective Reading: Decoding B1, B2, C***—(2-tape set) 4 hours, 38 minutes + practice time. Pilot video training tape that includes an overview of the *Corrective* series, placement procedures, training and practice on each part of a decoding lesson, information on classroom management/reinforcement, and demonstration of lessons (off-camera responses). Price $25.00.

## Conference Keynotes

These videos are keynotes from the National Direct Instruction Conference in Eugene. These videos are professional quality, two-camera productions suitable for use in meetings and trainings.

### *Keynotes From the 2003 National DI Conference, July 2003, Eugene, Oregon*

**To the Top of the Mountain—Giving Kids the Education They Deserve**—75 minutes. Milt Thompson, Principal of 21st Century Preparatory School in Racine, Wisconsin gives a very motivational presentation of his quest to dramatically change the lives of all children and give them the education they deserve. Starting with a clear vision of his goal, Thompson describes his journey that turned the lowest performing school in Kenosha, Wisconsin into a model of excellence.

In his keynote, Senior Direct Instruction developer Zig Engelmann focuses on the four things you have to do to have an effective Direct Instruction implementation. These are: work hard, pay attention to detail, treat problems as information, and recognize that it takes time. He provides concrete examples of the ingredients that go into Direct Instruction implementations as well as an interesting historical perspective. Price: $30.00

***No Excuses in Portland Elementary, The Right Choice Isn't Always the Easiest, and Where Does the Buck Stop?*** 2 tapes, 1 hour, 30 minutes total. Ernest Smith is Principal of Portland Elementary in Portland, Arkansas. The February 2002 issue of *Reader's Digest* featured Portland Elementary in an article about schools that outperformed expectations. Smith gives huge credit to the implementation of DI as the key to his students' and teachers' success. In his opening remarks, Zig Engelmann gives a summary of the Project Follow Through results and how these results translate into current educational practices. Also included are Zig's closing remarks. Price: $30.00

***Lesson Learned...the Story of City Springs, Reaching for Effective Teaching, and Which Path to Success?*** 2 Tapes, 2 hours total. In the fall of 2000 a documentary was aired on PBS showing the journey of City Springs Elementary in Baltimore from a place of hopelessness to a place of hope. The principal of City Springs, Bernice Whelchel addressed the 2001 National DI Conference with an update on her school and delivered a truly inspiring keynote. She describes the determination of her staff and students to reach the excellence she knew they were capable of. Through this hard work City Springs went from being one of the 20 lowest schools in the Baltimore City Schools system to one of the top 20 schools. This keynote also includes a 10-minute video updating viewers on the progress at City Springs in the 2000–2001 school year. In the second keynote Zig Engelmann elaborates on the features of successful implementations such as City Springs. Also included are Zig's closing remarks. Price: $30.00

***Commitment to Children—Commitment to Excellence and How Did We Get Here... Where are We Going?***—95 minutes. These keynotes bring two of the biggest names in Direct Instruction together. The first presentation is by Thaddeus Lott, Senior. Dr. Lott was principal at Wesley Elementary in Houston, Texas from 1974 until 1995. During that time he turned the school into one of the best in the nation, despite demographics that would predict failure. He is an inspiration to thousands across the country. The second presentation by Siegfried Engelmann continues on the theme that we know all we need to know about how to teach—we just need to get out there and do it. This tape also includes Engelmann's closing remarks. Price: $30.00.

**State of the Art & Science of Teaching and Higher Profile, Greater Risks**—50 minutes. This tape is the opening addresses from the 1999 National Direct Instruction Conference at Eugene. In the first talk Steve Kukic, former Director of Special Education for the state of Utah, reflects on the trend towards using research based educational methods and research validated materials. In the second presentation, ***Higher Profile, Greater Risks,*** Siegfried Engelmann reflects on the past of Direct Instruction and what has to be done to ensure successful implementation of DI. Price: $30.00

***Successful Schools... How We Do It***—35 minutes. Eric Mahmoud, Co-founder and CEO of Seed Academy/Harvest Preparatory School in Minneapolis, Minnesota presented the lead keynote for the 1998 National Direct Instruction Conference. His talk was rated as one of the best features of the conference. Eric focused on the challenges of educating our inner city youth and the high expectations we must communicate to our children and teachers if we are to succeed in raising student performance in our schools. Also included on this video is a welcome by Siegfried Engelmann, Senior Author and Developer of Direct Instruction Programs. Price: $15.00

***Moving from Better to the Best***—20 minutes. Closing keynote from the National DI Conference. Classic Zig Engelmann doing one of the many things he does well!... motivating teaching professionals to go out into the field and work with kids in a sensible and sensitive manner, paying attention to the details of instruction, making sure that excellence instead of "pretty good" is the standard we strive for and other topics that have been the constant theme of his work over the years. Price $15.00

***Aren't You Special***—25 minutes. Motivational talk by Linda Gibson, Principal at a school in Columbus, Ohio, successful with DI, in spite of minimal support. Keynote from 1997 National DI Conference. Price: $15.00

***Effective Teaching: It's in the Nature of the Task***—25 minutes. Bob Stevens, expert in cooperative learning from Penn State University, describes how the type of task to be taught impacts the instructional delivery method. Keynote from 1997 National DI Conference. Price: $15.00

*continued on next page*

# Videotapes on the Direct Instruction Model...continued

***Fads, Fashions & Follies—Linking Research to Practice***—25 minutes. Dr. Kevin Feldman, Director of Reading and Early Intervention for the Sonoma County Office of Education in Santa Rosa, California presents on the need to apply research findings to educational practices. He supplies a definition of what research is and is not, with examples of each. His style is very entertaining and holds interest quite well. Price: $15.00

***One More Time***—20 minutes. Closing from 1997 National DI Conference. One of Engelmann's best motivational talks. Good for those already using DI, this is sure to make them know what they are doing is the right choice for teachers, students and our future. Price: $15.00

***Keynotes from 22nd National DI Conference***—2 hours. Ed Schaefer speaks on "DI–What It Is and Why It Works," an excellent introductory talk on the efficiency of DI and the sensibility of research based programs. Doug Carnine's talk "Get it Straight, Do it Right, and Keep it Straight" is a call for people to do what they already know works, and not to abandon sensible approaches in favor of "innovations" that are recycled fads. Siegfried Engelmann delivers the closing "Words vs. Deeds" in his usual inspirational manner, with a plea to teachers not to get worn down by the weight of a system that at times does not reward excellence as it should. Price: $25.00

***Keynotes from the 1995 Conference***—2 hours. Titles and speakers include: Anita Archer, Professor Emeritus, San Diego State University, speaking on "The Time Is Now" (An overview of key features of DI); Rob Horner, Professor, University of Oregon, speaking on "Effective Instruction for All Learners"; Zig Engelmann, Professor, University of Oregon, speaking on "Truth or Consequences." Price: $25.00

***Keynote Presentations from the 1994 20th Anniversary Conference***—2 hours. Titles and speakers include: Jean Osborn, Associate Director for the Center for the Study of Reading, University of Illinois, speaking on "Direct Instruction: Past, Present, and Future"; Sara Tarver, Professor, University of Wisconsin, Madison, speaking on "I Have a Dream That Someday We Will Teach All Children"; Zig Engelmann, Professor, University of Oregon, speaking on "So Who Needs Standards?" Price: $25.00

***An Evening of Tribute to Siegfried Engelmann***—2.5 hours. On July 26, 1995, 400 of Zig Engelmann's friends, admirers, colleagues, and protégés assembled to pay tribute to the "Father of Direct Instruction." The Tribute tape features Carl Bereiter, Wes Becker, Barbara Bateman, Cookie Bruner, Doug Carnine, and Jean Osborn—the pioneers of Direct Instruction—and many other program authors, paying tribute to Zig. Price: $25.00

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**New from the Association for Direct Instruction**
**A tool for you...**

# Corrective Reading Sounds Practice Tape

CORRECTIVE READING
SOUNDS PRACTICE
ADI PO Box 10252 • Eugene, OR 97440
1-800-995-2464
© 2000 Association for Direct Instruction

Dear *Corrective Reading* User,

A critical element in presenting *Corrective Reading* lessons is how accurately and consistently you say the sounds. Of course, when teachers are trained on the programs they spend time practicing the sounds, but once they get back into the classrooms they sometimes have difficulty with some of the sounds, especially some of the stop sounds.

I have assisted ADI in developing an audio tape that helps you practice the sounds. This tape is short (12 minutes). The narrator says each sound the program introduces, gives an example, then gives you time to say the sound. The tape also provides rationale and relevant tips on how to pronounce the sounds effectively.

Thanks for your interest in continuing to improve your presentation skills.

Siegfried Engelmann
Direct Instruction Program Senior Author

## Order Form: Corrective Reading Sounds Tape

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# ADI Books Price List

The Association for Direct Instruction distributes the following Direct Instruction materials. Members of ADI receive a 20% discount on these materials. To join ADI and take advantage of this discount, simply fill out the form and include your annual dues with your order.

| Title & Author | Member Price | List Price | Quantity | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Preventing Failure in the Primary Grades** (1969 & 1997)<br>Siegfried Engelmann | $19.95 | $24.95 | | |
| **Theory of Instruction** (1991)<br>Siegfried Engelmann & Douglas Carnine | $32.00 | $40.00 | | |
| **Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons** (1983)<br>Siegfried Engelmann, Phyllis Haddox, & Elaine Bruner | $16.00 | $20.00 | | |
| **Structuring Classrooms for Academic Success** (1983)<br>S. Paine, J. Radicchi, L. Rosellini, L. Deutchman, & C. Darch | $11.00 | $14.00 | | |
| **War Against the Schools' Academic Child Abuse** (1992)<br>Siegfried Engelmann | $14.95 | $17.95 | | |
| **Research on Direct Instruction** (1996)<br>Gary Adams & Siegfried Engelmann | $24.95 | $29.95 | | |

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## What is ADI, the Association for Direct Instruction?

ADI is a nonprofit organization dedicated primarily to providing support for teachers and other educators who use Direct Instruction programs. That support includes conferences on how to use Direct Instruction programs, publication of *The Journal of Direct Instruction (JODI)*, *Direct Instruction News (DI News)*, and the sale of various products of interest to our members.

## Who Should Belong to ADI?

Most of our members use Direct Instruction programs, or have a strong interest in using those programs. Many people who do not use Direct Instruction programs have joined ADI due to their interest in receiving our semiannual publications, *The Journal of Direct Instruction* and *Direct Instruction News*. *JODI* is a peer-reviewed professional publication containing new and reprinted research related to effective instruction. *Direct Instruction News* focuses on success stories, news and reviews of new programs and materials and information on using DI more effectively.

## Membership Options

☐ $40.00 **Regular Membership** (includes one year subscription to ADI publications, a 20% discount on ADI sponsored events and on materials sold by ADI).

☐ $30.00 **Student Membership** (includes one year subscription to ADI publications, and a 40% discount on ADI sponsored events and a 20% discount on materials sold by ADI).

☐ $75.00 **Sustaining Membership** (includes Regular membership privileges and recognition of your support in *Direct Instruction News*).

☐ $150.00 **Institutional Membership** (includes 5 subscriptions to ADI publications and regular membership privileges for 5 staff people).

✔ Canadian addresses add $5.00 US to above prices.

✔ For surface delivery overseas, add $10.00 US; for airmail delivery overseas, add $20.00 US to the above prices.

✔ Contributions and dues to ADI are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

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